うちの娘の為ならば、俺はもしかしたら魔王も倒せるかもしれない。

For my daughter,
I might defeat
even the archenemy.

CHIROLU
イラスト＊トリュフ

「ラティナ、〝我、共に、汝、行く？〟」
デイルのその言葉に、
今度こそはっきりと
驚いた顔をした子ども――ラティナは、
こくり。と首を縦に振った。

デイル・レキ
ラティナの保護者となった青年
凄腕の冒険者だが、ラティナに対しては
すっかり親バカに!?
ケニス・クリューゲル
デイルが下宿する酒場『踊る虎猫亭』の亭主
妻と共にデイルとラティナの生活を見守る
リタ・クリューゲル
ケニスの妻で『踊る虎猫亭』の看板娘
子ども好きでラティナのことも可愛がっている

登場人物紹介
ルドルフ・シュミット
ラティナの友人その2
やや大柄な少年で、
ラティナのことが気になる？
ラティナ
デイルに拾われた魔族の少女
素直で優しく賢いが、
意外と頑固な面も
クロエ・シュナイダー
ラティナの友人その1
子どもたちのリーダー的存在である
男前な少女
アントニー・ホフマン
ラティナの友人その4
すらっとした体格の頭が良い少年
マルセル・ベッカー
ラティナの友人その3
少しぼっちゃり気味なパン屋の息子

「大好きだよ」
「ラティナも、デイルのこと、いちばんだいすき……」
ほんのかすかにでも、
微笑みを浮かべてくれた彼女に、
途方もなく安堵を感じた。
この子の笑顔のためならば、
自分は今まで以上に、
頑張ることが出来る。
そんなことを、胸の内に抱きながら。

For my daughter, I might even be able to defeat the demon king

Volume 1

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Prologue

In the world looking after rainbows

When you were born, a huge rainbow could be seen in the skies.

It's true you know. The rainbow was represented by all "people" as 7 colours. Even though their languages and cultures were different you see.

That was the rainbow but, apart from societies understanding, there was also something greater– it has been said that the rainbow was a part of god. God existed as 7 pillars. It seemed to be referred to as "The Seven Colours of God".

Afumaru, the red god, was the god of war. As well as the god of conciliation and judgement. If there was something troubling you, relying on the temple here would be best.

Korumozei, the orange god, was the god of harvest. Yup. They say that in order for a lot of produce to be grown... they also went to a festival together.

Asufaru, the yellow god, was the god of study and leadership. At this temple, a great amount of people gathered for the sake of studying. You too, you have a good head on your shoulders, maybe it won't be so bad to go there and study.

Under the supervision of Akudaru, the green god, travellers would gather. That's right, the world is AWFULLY wide. Things you have not seen before, you'll be inundated by the sheer volume.

Azuraku, the blue god, was the god of commerce. Once you grow up, I wonder what job you'll have.

Neeree, the indigo god, was the god to govern life and death. As well as the research of sickness and medicine.It's because magic has no effect on disease. So be very careful.

Banefusegi, the violet god, as the commander of the gods, had creation and destruction. As well as being the god to rule over rebirth.

The rainbow comes whenever the gods watch over us from above.

You were born whilst the gods watched over you.

That's why it'll all be alright.

It's because you were supposed to be able to be happy. It'll be great if you could be happy.

It'll be alright.

See, the rainbow is coming out.

You are protected by fate.

Please, somehow. Be happy.

I too, from now on, will head towards the rainbow and protect you from above.

Author notes:

I have plans for this to become an epic fantasy story.

Although i feel like I'm making a snap decision, so that until i can write to the end of my idea, i will come and do my best.

Please, if you can accompany me it’ll make me unbelievably happy.

Chapter 1
Youth
Meeting with a little girl

A young man was walking inside a thick forest.

Despite the fact that the sun is still up, this untouched, natural forest is creepily dim. There is nothing that can be heard apart from the occasional cawing of the birds. It was a place where a strong, oppressive presence was floating around.

He distorted his face, looking extremely unpleasant and looked at his lowered sword.

“Ahh… damn it”

He brushes the sword against the nearby grass as he curses. Terribly smelling mucus was stuck on it.

“There’s a reason why no one wants to do this job…. Geez, Guess I’ll go wash off before I go back”

Seeing that the mucus is sticking to even his own leather coat, he looked even more painful.

He arrived just a moment ago, having accepted the subjugation request for the frog-like magic beasts who had breeded massively within this forest. Getting rid of them wasn’t too hard of a task. For him who has a certain level of confidence regarding how he handles his weapons as well as his magic, the troublesome part was how long the round trip from the forest took.

“It was a connecting quest that I took because I had time until the next request but… I failed huh….”

He drops his shoulders, mixing in a sigh as he listens to the sticky, bisha bisha, sound of his own footsteps treading on the

grass.

The biggest reason as to why he took this job was the fact that the round trip distance was a day trip from the town that he is using as his current base of operations. He cursed himself for having made such a simple minded decision.

The job itself was nothing special.

For him, finding as well as exterminating the Coronee that are spawning inside the forest, was a simple task.

If only he isn't covered in their body juices, as well as the mucus they vomited out.

With regards to that terribly bad smell, his sole salvation was probably that his sense of smell was numbed early on.

However, if he returns to town like this then most likely, even his acquaintance of a gatekeeper would frown.

In the town that he is currently using as gis base of operations, he has become a reasonably famous adventurer. In this country where he who had just turned 18 is at an age considered to be an adult however, in his hometown, they treat 15 years old as the coming of age. He, who had decided this line of work to be his livelihood since that time, along with several years of achievements, was being marketed as a young fellow who shouldn't be made light of.

Black hair with some brown mixed in, a long coat made of magic beast leather, a magic gauntlet on his left hand. It was to the point where if you mention the above outer features, the name Dale Reki, would come to mind.

<”Oh Water, the origin of my name commands thy, hear my voice《Search : Water》”> Chanting a spell, he uses his magic. The presence of magic suddenly strengthened, changing into a course of water in which Dale pushed himself through an animal trail.

In the field of vision that opened up in front of him, a small stream was flowing. Finding what he was looking for, all the tension left from Dale’s face.

Taking off his coat, he drenches it in the running water. It was the only good suit that the magic-bearing him had but, there was just too much mucus running on it. The coat repels water so it dries immediately. Dale hangs it up on a nearby branch.

He thinks for a little while.

Looking over his body then confirming once again, he was again reminded of the discomfort he felt from the stink and mucus. Thinking that he might as well clean himself properly, he takes off his tunic meant for blocking blades.

Dale, who understood that the standards of the magic beasts and wild animals that reside in the forest would be no threat to him, casually acted as stated.

His coat was dry but, his pants and tunic were dripping wet. Reviving the campfire, Dale spreads out the top of the coat as a form of underwear, placing down on his waist then grills the river fish that he caught whilst he was bathing in the cold water.

Around when a savoury smell was drifting around the area, his clothes were also mostly dry. Dale quickly gets dressed as he takes notice of the fish. Obviously he wasn't shameless enough to be able to enjoy a meal in this kind of place in nothing but underwear.

Rustle.

Dale thought that it was some small animal that came, attracted by the smell, but as he moved his eyes over to there, he found himself lost for words.

A very young child, from the opposite side of the thicket was watching him.

A small head was slightly peeking out of the thicket.

Dale was, firstly, surprised that he had read the presence wrong.

Secondly, it was a young child but, it confused him seeing that such a small child was wondering around in this forest inhabited with monsters. There shouldn't be a village in the surrounding vicinity is what he thought, then he noticed *that*.

The child was endowed with a round, coiled up black horn on the side of her head.

('Demon race' huh... How troublesome...)

He clicks his tongue internally.

Even among the existing 7 'races', they held the most power, and being unsociable, they treated the other races as enemies. The special physical characteristic of the 'Demon Race' were the horns they have on the side of their heads.

(Should i kill it...?)

That would be quick and easy as well.

It's nothing but a sign of trouble.

Dale takes grip of the handle of the sword he was holding — and let go.

He had just washed himself after all, he didn't want to be bathed in a blood spray.

It seemed to be a passing thought but, it was a straight forward reason.

The kid was looking at him intently with it's large grey pupils, at an angle where it felt like it would tip over and fall.

Having released the sword, Dale cools down so that he could observe the kid. Noticing the reason for the uncomfortable feeling that he felt when he first saw it.

One of this kid's horns, was broken off from it's root.

(Oi oi... This kid, was she a criminal...?)

Dale who was taken aback, made a face that seemed to think even himself was stupid.

It was something he had heard from some adventurer friends, one of the customs of the Demon race.

—The Demon race think of their『Horn』, the symbol of their race as a holy object. That's why, those who commit a crime, are exiled with one of their horns snapped off as punishment —

Authors note:

The story couldn't progress as far as i thought but... i think i'll keep on writing like this.

Chapter 2
Youth
Picking up a little girl

To be acknowledged as a criminal, the child in front of him was way too young.

The ‘Demon race’ compared to a person of a ‘Human race’ like Dale, was a race that had long lives. Dale couldn’t even guess the ages of the ‘Human race’ are but, from the face peeking out of the thicket, he could see that she was around 5-6 years old.

It wasn’t an age where there was a lot of difference.

Noticing that the kid who had been watching him motionlessly had her eyes on the fish next to the camp-fire, Dale remembered its existence. He quickly took it off the skewer. It was a little burnt.

“….Hmm…”

If the skewer moves from left to right, so does the kid’s gaze.

Somehow it seems that this was also something that became quite noticeable.

“…Want some?”

It would be awkward if i just started eating in front of the kid like i was flaunting.

Working with that kind of mentality, he called out to her with a an almost uninterested voice. At the same time he

grumbles out a startling soliloquy, what the heck did i just say.

From his voice the kid once again turned her gaze towards his face, her neck leaning slightly forward.

["***?***,****?"]

"Hn? Oh...?"

The words coming out of the kids mouth, this time Dale had to lean his neck forward.

He couldn't catch her words fast enough but, he remembered that it was a language that he had heard somewhere before.

"Hmm... that guy, definitely..."

A while back about the demon race, he recalled some memories from a fellow adventurer who he had learnt some words from.

"The language of the demon race, is the same as the language you use to chant spell, what was it again..."

I hit my hands together as i think 'I got it'.

That's why the demon race are known as 'The magicians who are born along with everything', that's what's been said.

"Hmm..., so...[Here, come, need, this?]"

Because it's the spell-casting language, I relied on some simple words to hopefully make some sense out of what i was saying. I didn't have enough knowledge to hold conversation and such so, i didn't start to consider what was the right thing to do.

However, in a language that i understand, the kid's face was quite obviously relieved. She climbed over the thicket with a rustle, coming closer to Dale's side.

He called her over but, Dale was once again dazed.

Next to a strange person you don't know, not being wary at all, after the kid came closer— it wasn't just that.

The kid had become extremely thin.

Her arms and feet peeked out from a piece of rag cloth that was probably once a one piece. You could see nothing but skin and bones.

It was a questionable figure, and you could see that there were signs of malnutrition with just a glance.

To kill this kid, you wouldn't even need something as extravagant as a sword. If i just grip her far too thin neck with my hands, it would probably snap not too soon after.

The demon race were isolated, however they were at the same time recognised as a race with strong camaraderie. That's why being 'exiled' was only for extreme crimes.

Furthermore, as expected from a race with a long life span, their birthrate was considerably low.

Children to the demon race were, treasures.

This kid, even if she became a criminal, the possibility of her being left out here in this terrible condition, Dale didn't even think that.

"Give... eat....Ahh, what the hell am i saying..."

While Dale was grimacing, he held out the skewer to the kid like he pushing it away. The words 'Please eat this meal' doesn't exist in magic spells.

That's the reason that Dale was holding out the skewer but,

the kid kept staring at the fish, before finally looking up at Dale.

「 ” ******？ ” 」

“It’s fine, just eat it”

The kid looked to Dale questionably. Dale tried nodding for the time being. Seeing Dale like that, the kid slowly moved the fish to her mouth.

She ate with tiny bites, a little bit at a time.

He thought she was just like a small animal as he was left with nothing in his hand.

After waiting for the kid to finish her fish, Dale once again chose his words.

“Ahh,... [Thou, protect, person, together, exist?]”

It’s not like its been decided that her guardian isn’t here. The kid who was just asked kept looking up, had already been replying to Dale’s awkwardly phrased words since some time ago.

「 ” ***、**********、****。**********、******** ” 」

“Hmm,... together, exist, negative? ...beast, refused...?”

Dale could only piece together a few words, but the kids expression was clearly depressed. So that the kid could think for a bit, Dale took hold of her little hand with his arms.

Chasing after the kid who was advancing through the forest with small steps, Dale thinks to himself.

Calling out to her, handing over the fish, if i had to say why then it had to be a whim. As I was wondering what i was going to do from now on.

The kid suddenly stopped in her tracks, causing Dale to look up.

[“What? Ahead?”]

The kid pointed in front of her, shaking her head.

「 ” ********** ” 」

“More beasts? …That shouldn’t be it, right?”

While Dale was thinking about it, something step out of where the kid was pointing.

“Che!”

And then, my breath was taken away.

Even for Dale who swung his sword for a living, he hesitated to look at it in the eyes, “something that was once a person” was lying there.

(…This is, most likely, the demon race. Judging from the shape of the horn… male…) Neither the possible method nor the time of death could be determined.

The injuries were too severe.

In this forest there were a lot of monsters and beasts.

I don’t know if he was attacked or messed up after he died but, it was probably for that reason.

(The horns are… properly on both sides. …Was it her dad? There was no way he could just abandon her all by herself even if she was exiled, something like that) I wonder if it’s right to feel like i should help that.

I thought back to the words the kid said earlier.

If i connect the dots, perhaps, that could've been what the father requested of her at the end.

—You mustn't stay by my corpse. In that time the beasts would probably gathered around. If that happens, then the kid wouldn't even get the slightest chance to protect herself.– or something of the such.

"Ahh... damn it. If i see this kinda thing, then there's no way i can just leave the kid..."

Dale scratched his head roughly.

He had been given the father's final wish.

Furthermore, even though she followed the command until she was no where by his side, she quietly survived in the same forest and discovered his body.

["By the origins of my name, followers of Gaia I commandeth, change into what this one desire <<Gaia Metamorphosis>>"]

I chanted the spell with my hand next to the ground of the corpse. The ground sunk like it was getting the hell beat out of it, opening up a hole.

The kid approached Dale at some point, looking up at him timidly, most likely due to the spell.

Dale said looking at the kid.

"Let's bury him, at the very least. ...I wonder if she understood? Hmm... [Entomb, Dirt, Death, Person]..."

To show that she understood what Dale was saying, she nodded sleepily once.

For a minute, Dale was troubled if he should show her the

corpse in it's horrible condition but, it seems like the kid had already accepted this some time ago. He shifted the gaze back to the 'father' once again staring intently as a final farewell.

Perhaps, it might be something that should be visited every now and then.

After placing the corpse into the hole, Dale covers the hole back up with his magic and watched over the kid silently.

「 ” ***** ” 」

“Was that Thanks? Don't worry about it.”

On top of the grave that he had just finished, Dale once again exercised his magic.

With earth magic, he summoned a giant pure white stone to place on it.

He couldn't carve a name on it but, for an improvisation this is probably a pretty good grave.

“... Sigh..., well, i guess this is also fate”

Behind the kid who keeps on staring intently at the grave, Dale sighed.

[“This one's name, “Dale”, Thou, Name is?”]

Turning her head around, she said with a surprised expression.

“Latina”

And thus with one word, she spun out a sound.

“Latina... huh. Latina, [This one, Together, Thou, Go?]”

To the words that Dale said, the kid who will also definitely from here on out make even more surprised expression–

Latina, sleepily nodded her head.

Author's note:

Finally Latina's name is revealed.

Regarding the spell chants, to the people who don't understand their meanings, it's just a list of sounds. You can think of it as a completely different language. The 'spells' in this story are chanted with that kind of meaning, or that's how it's being represented anyway.

Chapter 3
Youth
Going back with a little girl

Rag-like clothes and partially wrecked shoes. That and a silver bracelet– One that seemed more fitting for an adult, as it was too big for her– seemed to be the only things that she was wore.

It's a great accomplishment if she really did manage to survive in this condition. Perhaps it was a blessing due to the calm season.

When Dale buried Latina's father, he searched the body hoping for some sort of identification. He hoped that at the very least, the kid could hold on to just a single memento from her actual parent but, absolutely nothing could be found.

"Hmm... If i let Latina walk... the day would totally end."

Dale talked to himself, looking down at the kid whose pace wasn't even half of his. Besides we in this situation. It doesn't seem like there's much more strength either.

"Can't be helped..."

Latina made another surprised face once I held out my arms and carried her in them. This kid normally has large eyes but when she makes that expression they become bigger and bigger.

Latina didn't act violently and stayed put in Dale's arms.

"So light!"

Latina was so delicately light that I unintentionally let that out.

“Seriously… is she alright, this kid…”

When they had first met he held onto a dangerous thought, but there’s no reason to express it.

In the first place Dale wasn’t a bad guy. Apart from deciding to get involved, his conscience is at work, worrying about that kid to such an extent.

“Nothing on her… i guess we should hurry on back”

After Dale quickly casted earth magic to confirm the direction, they hurriedly walked towards the district.

The district that Dale was currently using as a base was called “Kreuz”. Like it’s name says, it’s a little crooked but, this district which is in the shape of a cross, is a important position for the traffic from the harbour to the imperial city. As well as it being near a habitat zone for magical beasts, it is also a gathering zone for ruffians who survive with only their skill calling themselves adventurers.

A city where goods and people gather, second city of the country of Rabando. That is the district known as Kreuz.

That plot of lands properties as well as their tolerance for travellers are Kreuz’s specialities.

Due to the favourable treatment that those who call themselves merchants get with foreign things, the development of the Kreuz was accomplished. Those funds established the beginnings of the compensation money, to protect the district from the threat known as magic beasts and other potential dangers.

Thus Kreuz became known for being composed of mainly travellers.

The district of Kreuz was being surrounded by a thick wall. There were gates at each of the compass direction, with guards stationed at each. Everyone pays a toll there so they can enter inside.

Dale passed by the southern gate that he always used.

After seeing Dale, the guard, who was an acquaintance, made a face like “Oh my”.

“Toll, for two”

“Ahh… What the? What’s wrong with that kid? …Demon race”

The middle-aged guard who asked took notice of Latina who was being held by Dale, said that while checking the coin which was handed over to him.

“I took care of her in the forest. It seems like she was separated from her parents by death. …I’ve become her guardian, so there’s no problem right?”

“Well, isn’t it fine? Since you’re responsible now. Just in case, you’ve confirmed it with “Dancing Ocelot” right?”

“Uh huh”

“Well, it’s probably fine then”

The guard let Dale pass after just that, and focused on the next group.

The guard’s reaction was just as Dale expected. He knew that the reputation he had established had that level of power.

Leaving the southern gate, was the are where the common folk reside and the shops targeted at travellers were next to each other.

First of all we have no use for the noble district situated in the

elevated areas of the north, nor the residential ward for the high class in the west. At most we might go to the east where the markets, shops and working class gather.

The country of Rabando, has established that Afumaru to be their god, which is why they value the colour red.

You can see that even in the townscape of Kreuz.

For example the walls of the buildings standing side by side, such as various colours painted with plaster and paint were peeling, revealing the gray stone walls, however almost all the roofs were vivid red.

It's been said that this is, a Shinto prayer for the sake of the building itself receiving god's protection, as well as an appeal to the god's who are in the High Heavens that their humble servants are right here.

If you're talking about the lower ends of town, the streets are full of energy.

The time when the sun starts going down, around now, there are many who are coming and going such as– those hurrying home, those looking for a place to stay tonight, those who spend their daily earnings into snacks and beer, those who target travellers to sell foodstuffs to– *etc.*

In Dale's arms was Latina who truly couldn't calm down, turning her gaze every here and there.

That expression, wasn't one of fear and surprise. It seemed to be one of genuine curiosity. With a slight dizzy face, her eyes would sometimes become a perfect circle. It seems like she's charmed by the amount of people, their appearances and street-scape.

“We’ll go see the streets next time alright...?”

She probably wouldn’t understand anyway, thought Dale as he said that to Latina.

「 ” ***？ Dale ” 」

“Ahh... as i thought, not being able to communicate sure is inconvenient...”

Amongst the human race, the most spoken language is the one from the Western Continent thus it is a necessity, Dale thought as he continued with his strides.

He proceeded smoothly at his own pace.

Eventually Dale’s feet stopped, in front a single storey shop.

The entrance, had a iron sign with a mysterious design in the shape an ocelot, and a line up of flags with a pegasus crest embroidered on the green bottom.

It was the shop which functions as both bar and inn known as the [Dancing Ocelot Pavilion].

When Dale turned around and headed for the back, he peeked into the shop from the rear entrance.

“Kenneth, you here?”

“Ohh. Dale, you’re back... wait, what is that?”

That had become the kitchen. The man known as as Kenneth was a noticeably big man with a scruffy beard at the prime of his life, turned his head around as he flipped his frying pan, frowned.

“Well... I’ll into more detail later but... I picked her up.”

“Oi, don’t say it like you picked up a dog or cat”

Kenneth who splendidly placed the finished dish onto a plate, made an even more troubled face at Dale's response.

This burly man was a fundamentally soft-hearted person but, until recently he was an adventurer capable of swinging around a gigantic battle axe. That was a commonly known truth by the people who use the shop.

"I any case, can i use the bath?"

"Ahh, no problem but..."

After receiving Kenneth's consent, Dale opened the door on the small house provided opposite the back entrance.

There, stone tiles were spread around where a bathtub was installed.

While it's simple, it has been arranged to look like a bathing area.

Dale poured his magic power into the heat and water "Magic tool" next to the bathtub. While confirming the temperature, he filled the bathtub with hot water

Because of the magic tool, the supply of water was ridiculous, making hot water wasn't very hard either. Although I say that, many of the houses of the general public don't have a bathing area. Everyone usually go to the operating bathhouses here and there as a norm.

The bathing area of "The Dancing Ocelots", was a place for adventurers where, regardless of when they come back from their requests, could use the hot water. Similar to Dale from a few days back, the number of adventurer's returning in critical conditions isn't low.

Latina was stared straight at it. She might be thinking that Magic tools were quite unusual themselves.

Dale took off his coat, and after placing his sword, gauntlets, and other belongings to the side, called for Latina.

“Latina, [Come]”

After some beckoning, Latina stood next to Dale.

When Dale was trying to help take Latina’s clothes off, she resisted at first.

“Ah... She’s a girl, just as i thought”

Dale murmured as she threw Latina, who had been peeled naked with a reluctant expression, into the bathtub.

He thought it was something like that from the voice and clothes, but couldn’t come to a conclusion until he had confidence. He rinses her hair and pathetic, bony body with hot water. The water in the bathtub immediately becomes completely black.

Discarding the water once, making another bath.

The bath bubbled up once the soap was added to the tub. And along with Latina’s dirts and oils, he washes her hair that’s become like a rope.

He washes the body too. And replaces the dirty water again.

Making another bath, while Dale was washing Latina’s hair, he suddenly realises.

(Huh? This kid, ehh.... doesn’t she have the qualities of a beauty?)

Latina’s hair, which was watched countless times, recovered a silver radiance.

The horn on one side, was also glossy.

Her ribcage was sticking out, she pitifully lost weight but, that'll likely recover from here on out. The demon race, was originally a tenacious type of race after all.

Because her face appears worn out too, only her eyes were standing out right now but, Latina's facial features which had the dirt cleaned off was quite arranged. Her cheeks had a trace of roundness, once her complexion is better she'll probably become a charming little girl.

(Ahh... this, it'll be bad to wake up to, it's becoming even harder now to find a reason to throw her away.)

If I let go of this hand, then before i know it she'll probably be noticed by some no-good pervert. A demon missing a single horn, 'abandoned by its own race, without any backing', something like that will probably spread around.

For those who think about children in the wrong way, she would be a considerable trophy.

(I decided to be involved but... am I prepared for it...?)

Dale muttered that in his heart.

Author's note:

Describing the setting sure is hard. I wrote more this time before i realised it.

Chapter 4
Youth
Deciding to become her guardian

“Dale, aren’t you feeling somewhat guilty for this?”

Dale turned towards the fairly young voice just in time to see a black hair girl stepping into “The Dancing Ocelot” from the rear entrance.

It was Kenneth’s wife Rita.

“The Dancing Ocelot” was a lodging managed by this young couple.

Rita, seeing how Dale was scrubbing down that little girl so enthusiastically was startled.

“Your illegitimate child?”

“What gave you that idea? When would I have had this kid?”

Dale replied like he was shocked.

“Picked her up in the forest. Her parent’s corpse was also there.”

He answered straight-forwardly. While Rita was listening to that she observed the girl carefully, noticing her pitiful appearance and race. Falling down next to him, her eyes stopped at a piece of tattered cloth.

“What that kid wore, it couldn’t have been… that? There’s no way she’ll be wearing this again right?”

“Ah… I forgot”

“Just wait here a bit”

Rita rushed back out of the rear entrance she just came from.

Dale only thought about cleaning the filth off, so he completely forgot about her change of clothes *etc.*

「”Dale、*****？”」

“Hmm? Just now, question,...who was that someone just now? Rita, the hostess of this place”

“...? Rita?”

“Yup, Rita.”

While conversing with Latina who tilted her head in doubt deeply, Rita came back. She was carrying various pieces of cloth in her arms.

“If it’s like that then no good even as a towel, right! Use this. These are my old clothes. But i think it’s a bit big for this kid. Now, underwear!”

“Ah... my bad, Sorry ’bout this Rita”

“What’s with that doubtful face. It’s something new I sowed just the other day. Even I don’t think it would be great to wear second hand underwear.”

Rita held out a piece underwear that had not a drop of sexual appeal, and said bluntly to Dale who had a complicated face.

Rita was this kind of girl. If not for that, then she probably could not have run something like a shop that dealt with adventurers.

Lifting Latina up from the bathtub, covering her up with the soft cloth that Rita handed over. Latina pointed at Rita as she was getting wiped down.

“Dale, Rita?”

“Uh huh. That’s right.”

“Rita, Latina.”

Latina pointed to herself, lowered her head and did a quick bow.

“You can already do greetings, aren’t you amazing~”

Rita smiled happily, crouching down to meet eyes with Latina. This hostess particularly likes children. Even when she was with Kenneth, even her wishes to be blessed with children quickly, Dale knew about it.

“Rita. Latina, doesn’t understand anything but Demon Language.”

“Is that so? Then how are you communicating with her?”

“It’s the same as spell words, so I manage somehow one word at a time.”

“Hmm… then what do you want to do? This kid?”

“For now, first I’ll go investigate her at “Akudaru’s message board” in the shop.”

Latina, without the help from Dale, got dressed in the clothes given to her. It seems like she can handle her own belongings.

If not for that, then she probably wouldn’t have been able to survive.

Latina seems to be more reliable than what her appearance reveals.

During the time Latina spent changing, Dale brought his things from the rear entrance into the shop.

There still wasn’t a change of shoes so, Latina, who had finished changing, was picked up into Dale’s arms once again. Following Rita, they entered the rear entrance, going past the kitchen, coming out into the front of the store.

Leaving through the counter, next to Kenneth who was manning the store all by himself acting as the salesperson.

There was a reasonable amount of people coming down to

eat at the store, it was fairly busy.

This shop, on top of its disposition, will become busy before noon and when the sun has completely fallen. Right now it seems to just be Kenneth himself working the floor.

Rita sat opposite Dale at a corner of the counter.

“Now, what would you like to know?”

“Her name is Latina. Demon race. Can you lead an investigation with these conditions? Or, make an arrangement of some sort?”

“True. That’s essential”

Rita nods and slides her hand across the plank called “Akudaru’s message board” that’s been set up in the counter.

“Rauha, Seggeru, Yona-dee”

Reacting to Rita’s words, the board let out a pale green light.

When Rita’s gaze moves, some place that’s not here could be seen.

“Uh huh… there’s no information coming. I might as well try searching again, this time using her exterior features but…”

“Please”

What Rita is manipulating, “Akudaru’s message board”, is definitely the store’s biggest advantage.

Akudaru is the god who governs all information and protects travellers.

Akudaru’s temples, have become places to gather and manage every and all information. The priests and pastors that belong to this god, with that power of divine protection, could perform powerful information transfer magic at a level which

could not be compared to normal. That is, the biggest reason.

Due to this, in the regions with a temple of Akudaru, there is no disparity in the land, as the information is being shared equally.

A part of that information, is also released to the town.

However to become that point of contact, like this shop, you must hoist the flag with the crest of Akudaru– A pegasus on green land–

–One theory is that, the people in the temples who wish to solely focus on gathering information, found the demands of the outsiders who wanted information to be troublesome, so it's been said that they completely left commissioning to outsiders. Giving that story a bit of credibility, the Shinto priests of Akudaru, all seems to be living peculiarly–

The information that's released to the town is usually, world news, new discoveries, inventions and such. As well as crime-related reports.

Criminals and etc who have performed big crimes are searched for throughout the world.

Having another country's soldiers and officials cross borders and chase after criminals is a difficult matter. For that reason, using compensation money, they are able to search via the temple. Amongst adventurers, there are many who specialise in chasing after such a reward.

Requests such as the subjugation of a large scale monster can also be collected at the temples.

"Akudaru's Message Board" is a terminal for extracting information from the temples. To a certain shop, that is a place where adventurers who seek information come and gather. For the purpose of those adventurers, the townsfolk also gather at

this place carrying requests and such.

"The Dancing Ocelot" is a bar and inn, but at the same time it is also an agency for adventurers looking for work.

"There's no one relevant, just like i thought"

"Then... there's no way that Latina is a felon. ...If no search is being done by the parents either, then that corpse, there's no doubt that must've been her father."

Dale and Rita were both talking with a serious face about their own things, not knowing if they understand or not.

Latina looks around restlessly on Dale's lap, observing the surroundings and looking up at Dale.

In this shop, having a figure of a child was so out of place that the stern looking men having their meals, would occasionally glance this way. When Latina met those gazes, she would tilt her head with a nod, and would keep on trying to return the gaze by staring at them.

After doing that for a short while, a strange noise resounded from Latina.

Specifically, it was the bug from her stomach which cried out.

"...Latina?"

"Ahh-Lured by the smell it seems."

Both of them noticed it at once, Latina had a slightly awkward expression.

Rita laughed with a 'Karakara', then calling over Kenneth.

"Kenneth, make a meal for this kid. I wonder if it would be better if it's something easy to digest?"

“While you’re at it make me something too.”

Saying that Dale moved from the counter to a table seat. Since the table was too high for Latina, she could only sit down after something, which was the appropriate size, was carried onto the top of the chair like a pedestal. Dale also brought the chair closer, sitting beside her.

“So, Dale what are you going to do with this kid?”

“I’ll look after her. This is fate too. She can’t communicate, even if i handed another race’s kid over to one of the orphanages in this district who are eternally in debt, in wouldn’t be any good right?”

The declaration that came out of my mouth, is also something to prepare myself.

Dale, as well as the kid, the responsibility to raise them was not something that was easy to think about.

“I will become this kid’s parent.”

Author’s note:

There’s no shape for something like the adventurers guild.

Every “Temple” is also a religious institution, a position of public institution or so.

Even if you’re not a devout follower to the temple you can still use recovery magic, it’s not “Priest” = Healer.

That kinda setting, I wanted to include in the story as well but, the writing outside of the main story would increase…

Chapter 5
Youth
Thinking to the little girl's smile

Latina's grey pupils were like circles when the hot and steaming milk and cheese risotto was placed in front of her.

Across from that, placed a soup cooked with smoked meat and small vegetables.

Next to that extremely neatly arranged food, was Dale's portion which was double that. Furthermore, to Dale's plate a large sausage was also placed.

"Latina's share, ain't that too little?"

"You idiot. This small a kid, there's no way she could eat the same amount as you like an idiot right."

Rita who was waiting on them, said shockingly.

"Also if you make her eat too much, she'll get sick you know"

Rita smiled widely as she handed the spoon to Latina. The difference in treatment for Dale and the other guests was like heaven and earth.

「Dale？ ” *********？ ” 」

"Yea, eat up."

Dale also slightly noticed it, how this small kid was asking for his permission for every little thing.

She didn't understand the meaning of his words but, just by looking at his face she understood.

Latina put the spoon into the risotto, scooped up one spoon,

carrying it's way into her mouth-and was shocked.

If you see her opening her mouth huffing and puffing like that in such a panicked way, you would think that the food was hotter than it seems.

"Rita, some water"

"Ara, was it too hot?"

She was blowing on the second spoonful with a 'fuu fuu' for dear life. Whilst laughing at that sort of Latina, Dale raised his voice, attracting the frowns from Rita.

Latina's expression lightened up as she started to gulp down the risotto.

It was easy to understand.

"I see, it's good huh? That's great."

Dale too, warmed his expression as he ate his food. It was strange since having such a enjoyable expression next to him, made the ordinary meal feel that extra bit delicious.

Within Dale's words, a gentle tone could probably be detected.

Latina, smiled sweetly.

It was the first smile she showed.

"Un, eat more, Latina. Want some sausages too?"

"Hey, I just told you that making her eat too much is bad for her right!"

After moving an ample amount of food from his own plate to Latina's plate, Dale got hit on the head 'Pakon' with a tray by

Rita, who was coming back with the water.

Latina made a surprised face.

“But… if she doesn’t have enough nutrients it’s not good right…”

“I’m talking about making her eat all that in one sitting! I’ve already prepared the snacks for this kid! Kenneth! Once wasn’t enough, increase the count!”

Further away,

“I’m the one who made it-… well, it’s not a problem anyway…”

a voice like that could be heard but, the two didn’t even stop to pretend to care.

Due to Latina, who was eating away slowly like always, regardless of the fact that there was quite a difference, Dale still finished his meal first.

So that she could see and manage when Latina finishes her meal, Rita brought over an additional dish.

If you look inside, there would be a number of sliced fruits covered in syrup.

At this store which did not normally have sweets on the menu, it was the first time anything dessert-like was seen.

“Kenneth being sweet to kids… you can’t count on appearances…”

If you see the slight warmth, then its probably something improvised. Something made just for Latina to eat.

Placing it in front of Latina, she once again looked to him for permission. Seeing Dale nod, she put a fruit into her mouth.

Paaaaaaa,

her expression brightened up, making the happiest expression she's had until now. Her eyes were sparkling.

"That's great"

Latina who was eating like she was in a trance, seemed to enjoy the compote very much. In that forest, it probably took her all just to find anything to eat. There shouldn't have been anything sweet either.

"How is it? Good?"

Rita who was passing by, bringing the food to the other customers took a peek at Latina, Latina turned towards Rita and gave a smile that was even better than before.

A smile so wide, that it seemed like flowers were blooming behind her.

Even if she couldn't communicate with them, it was more than satisfactory answer.

(I need to teach her words soon… so that she won't be baited by food and follow some weirdo away.)

Towards that smile of Latina's, Dale who grasped his fists tightly under the table, was self-conscious that he could fed Latina.

Even when everything's been eaten, Latina kept looking at the compote plate.

Dale gently patted her head. It could be due to the surprise of how sudden it was but, her body sprung up in shock.

However, she relaxed after looking at Dale's expression.

"Did I surprise you, sorry. Today's been a tough day right? A lot of things have happened after all."

Listening to Dale speak, Latina tilted her head.

During this time too, she didn't turn her eyes away as if she was seeking Dale's true intentions. Speaking of which this kid, looks around quite a lot. Her observational skills might be pretty good.

But it's quite a difference from her wariness, which seems to be quite low.

Latina wriggled her way around Dale's neck and arms as he picked her up once again. Although somewhat awkward, the

way she put her strength into Dale was as if she was depending on him.

Thanks to Latina clinging on to him like that, she was nice and stable. Dale supported her using one of his hands and once again moved towards the counter.

“Rita, Latina should be resting soon, we’ll be going to our rooms.”

“Alright. Rest well, Latina-chan.”

To Rita’s voice, Latina once agained smiled sweetly. Somehow it seems that during this short period of time, she’s recognised Dale and Rita to be safe people.

Compared to when they just met, her expressions have softened considerably.

That was an extremely happy, and embarrassing feeling.

Shortly after the meeting, even Dale was the same. Thinking of how he was now accompanied by such a small like this, it would have been completely unimaginable for the him of yesterday.

Entering once again from the side of the counter, exiting from the kitchen.

Towards his stressful back,

“Kenneth. Latina said the fruits were delicious.”

came a voice.

“Ou”

Passing behind Kenneth who gave a reply without turning his back, Dale went up the stairs, inside of the place where all kinds of food materials were stacked up.

Without stopping on the second floor, he continued climbing

up the steps.

What he reached, was the attic.

Various types of luggages thrown around messily– Most of them were inventory merchandise that are to be sold to the adventurers on the first floor. –And further inside was one corner which felt like a living space.

It was Dale's rented corner.

Having this place was also one of the reasons why Dale decided to take care of Latina.

It wasn't like Dale was one of the town's residents, but he rented this place, in the case that he needed to stay in a base for a long time, and it doubled as a living area. The lodging having only one room has it's inconveniences here and there, it was a story of how he relied on his old friend Kenneth.

Before Rita got married, it was being used as a vacant, private attic space, and it was decided with no objections that the space was to be rented out. If you ignore the fact that the ceiling was a little low, it was enough to live in.

Dale was good with rent, his belongings and closet didn't stink of cheap, old rip-offs either. To the landlord couple who understood his basic lifestyle and personality, he didn't seem to be a bad candidate at all.

Dale lowered Latina into his 'room'.

In that room thick, foreign rugs were laid out, with a chair and a shelf was near the window. Behind that was a bed and a container with a huge lid. As a resident he didn't have much luggage but, as a traveller it was probably quite a bit to carry around.

["Short, Wait, This place"]

After Latina nodded to her head to confirm, Dale went back down one more time to get bring up his coat and the luggage.

When Dale came back, Latina was walking aimlessly inside the 'room'. As expected this kid's curiosity was quite strong. Even so to be able to not just try and touch everything, her self-control was probably strong too.

It was hard recalling what he did when he was around that age but he thought her reliable, even with the children running about the town floating in his head.

Dale kicks off his boots, entering his territory.

His hometown was a place with no chairs, and had a culture of sitting directly on just the floor, so his room was a place of joyful familiarity for him. Another reason for that were the rugs which had his hometown-style to it. He wouldn't even think to dirty those rugs with dirt.

He hangs his coat next to the box with his luggage. The shelf near the bed was also the home for his weapons.

After opening the window letting fresh air enter, he removed his tunic made from the blade blocking material and thick pants.

"Latina, come here"

Latina who understood him via his gestures, approached him obediently. Dale took the girl, and went to bed.

Compared to the rhythm of his normal life, this was quite early, but being able to rest when it is time to rest is a skill that was indispensable for adventurers.

Sleeping just like this was no problem whatsoever.

He worried about if Latina would fuss around in bed like she wouldn't like it, but on the contrary she was laying quietly, flat next to Dale.

Latina was just like a kitten, curling her body up, the time until she starts making sleeping breaths shouldn't be very long.

(Just as I thought, she was tired huh. She didn't understand the words, or the situation, and was even lead to a place where she was surrounded by unknown people.)

Dale even surprised himself as he stroked Latina's hair gently.

He had just decided to become her parent, so thinking about these things were also slightly mysterious. But living with someone else like this might not be too bad.

While thinking about these things, Dale fell asleep feeling the warmth of someone warmer than him.

Not long after that, he was woken up by a pale Latina's barrage, 'pechi pechi'.

The first thing that Latina could remember was the request for "Toilet".

By the way, her dignity was protected.

Author's note:

Concerning the clothes, accessories and foods, it was described pretty loosely on purpose.

I mean, wouldn't you wish to wear an outfit that's impractical but cute! (to my daughter!)

Describing just bread and cheese, that wouldn't be any fun! (for us!)

Like this, please understand that these points will be how it's done now.

Chapter 6

Youth

Going into town with the little girl

When Dale woke up, it was quite early.

It was probably due to him sleeping early last night. Dale turning his gaze to the presence of another, noticed the girl next to him.

"...Ahh, that's right....I picked her up."

While yawning, he thought to the family member living with him. Latina who was breathing out like "Kyupuru Kyupuru" out of tune, was firmly grabbing onto a piece of Dale's clothing.

How will I get out of bed without waking her up. He thinks.

But when Dale got up, Latina's eyes suddenly shot open.

Jumping to her feet as if she was in shock and chasing after Dale.

Dale let out a small grin, as he felt a sliver of Latina's uneasiness. In a way that could calm her down a little bit.

"Good morning, Latina"

Saying that, he patted her head.

The attire that Dale was wearing today, different from when he was working, a simple shirt, and a comfortably made pair of trousers. On his waist wears only his wallet and a small knife. He tidies his bed hair with his fingers. Putting on his boots and carrying Latina up into his arms.

She didn't change her clothes at all, and slept just like that last night. Her skirt became a little wrinkly.

Going down to the first floor, directing Latina to go towards the table in the kitchen that wasn't the store.

"Ara, good morning, Latina-chan"

Rita smiled at Dale and Latina as she noticed them. Of course, only to Latina.

Kenneth and Rita were right in the middle of breakfast preparations. All adventurers, eat in excessive amounts from the morning. There was an abnormal amount of food required compared to the number of people who are living there.

Dale went around the back casually, washing his face at the washing area across from the bathing area. Cleaning the towel that he used to wipe his face, he went back to where Latina was, handing to her the soaked 'thing'.

She seemed to have understood the meaning correctly. She wiped her face 'koshi koshi', with the soaked 'thing'.

Doing the laundry for his underwear-type clothes, was his first sequence of work in the morning. He hung them at the drying place set up at the washing area.

Returning, Rita was combing Latina's hair. Rita seemed to be amazed, emotional and restless, all at the same time.

"Latina-chan's hair, what a beautiful colour. Splendid~. Dale you idiot. A girl's hair, keeping it all roughed up like yours, that's no good!"

Indeed, after the comb has went through Latina's hair, it's become so beautiful that it could never have been compared to up till now. That kind of thing, the novice guardian wrote

down in the memo book inside his heart.

Rita skilfully arranged Latina's hair, tying it up with a ribbon. The hair and string pretty much hid Latina's horn.

Rita took a fleeting glance at Dale, and said as if she was whispering.

"Even if she's of the Demon race, having one horn broken off, it's probably better if it's not too conspicuos"

"I understand. Sorry about this"

After saying that to Rita, Dale turned his gaze to Latina.

There was no change to her figure but, to Latina who was now clean, had neat hair and clothes, no matter how you looked at her, she was a girl. She was a completely different person from the kid back in the forest who was dirtied to the point where you couldn't distinct between the gender.

"Ohh, morning. Come on, it's breakfast"

Passing by Rita, Kenneth turned up holding a plate in both hands. Latina looked towards Kenneth, and after thinking for a little bit,

"Mo,re,nin"

Looking like she didn't have much confidence, she quickly lowered her head after that.

Kenneth stiffened up. Dale distorted his expression.

Hearing the same words since morning, it probably hit her that it was a greeting after a bit of thought.

As expected, it seems this kid excels in observational powers. Even if you question if it was because she was a race which was

considerably smart, that was probably just a vague guess.

「 ” ***？ *****？ ” 」

“No, it’s right. [Correct]”

To Dale’s expression, Latina became anxious thinking that she was wrong.

To Latina who became anxious thinking she was wrong seeing Dale’s expression, Dale smiled at her in panic.

“Damnit, remember this Kenneth”

“So immature”

However, Dale who had her [First greeting] taken away from him, kept complaining to Kenneth whilst smiling. Kenneth too, for some reason couldn’t stop smiling.

“It would be nice if Rita can give birth soon”

Kenneth returned back to work as he muttered, ‘a child would be nice’.

Dale’s breakfast was just the normal bread with cheese and grilled smoke meat on the menu, but Latina’s portion was made specially for her. The bread was dipped in milk and egg, the middle was baked so it was glistening, placed on top of the compote from yesterday. Thinly sliced smoked meat, was grilled until it looked crisp.

Magic tools in general circulate around.

The tools that every family have are first, 『Water』,『Fire』then 『Water/ Dark』. Each of these were tools used in the kitchen. In order words 『Drinking water supply』and『Ignition』, 『Freezers from ice』 can all be done with Magic tools.

However as all things they have a price, naturally using the

common well, using fire to ignite things, there's no reason for these things to not exist. However they were the overwhelming minority. It was no match to convenience.

Due to that, chilled food wasn't very unusual.

The glass in front of Latina was filled with juice, but something like that was to be expected.

Latina turned to look at Dale happily as she drank it suddenly.

"Ahh, that's nice…. that Kenneth, he's really feeding her huh"

So that Latina couldn't hear the latter half he murmured it in a soft voice.

Latina ate the bread as if she was in trance. It seems that she more into sweeter stuff.

"Hey, Rita. Where do they sell clothes that girls wear?"

Finishing his meal, Dale inquired as he returned the plates. Latina, who was still halfway through her meal, looked this way in panic, She moved her waist to the position she could see, peeling a big heap of potato skin. Making the other person stop moving their hands, helping out was something that came naturally to him due to his sense of justice.

"Later, teach me the things that I will need to know immediately please. From a men's point of view, it might be something we forget."

"Maybe… if you want a tailor, something like Amanda's store in the east district has quite a good reputation. Maa, the weather's nice, you would probably leave for the plaza in the city. Over there it might be good to search for second-hand clothes. Solve your shoe problem at Baltic's place. It's a corner shop. Hmm, after that would be…"

Rita stopped moving her hands, gliding her pen to create a list.

Dale just listening to it, felt a sliver of intensity of how girl's deal with shopping, and shivered.

Dale left the "Dancing Ocelot" as he held Latina up in his arms.

"First on the list is shoes huh... because walking barefoot is just no good yea"

Her weight wasn't a pain or anything but, you couldn't carry luggage at the same time.

"Dale?"

"『Shopping』, how should I say this..."

'I could buy her a picture book and head back', he says in a soliloquy. It wasn't cheap but, something of that level wouldn't bother him too much.

As they entered the closer to the heart of the city, the figures of adventurers disappeared, and the number of people who lived here increased. The plaza in the center held a market, so there were probably a lot of people eyeing for the products that the neighbouring villagers, travelling merchants put up.

Dale turned from the road midway, heading towards the eastern district.

Just like he had heard from Rita, he passed through the doors of the shop set up by the craftsman known as Baltic.

"So tired..."

Next to Dale, who was dead tired, a huge bag was piled up.

Speaking the truth, defeating magic beasts was easier. In a shop with no one but girls, continuing to shop for unfamiliar things, he didn't think it would be this mortifying.

He really wished that the stares he got from holding up a young girl's underwear would stop. If Latina wasn't next to him, they most likely would've called the guards over.

Thinking about all of these things until he felt depressed, Dale was exhausted many times over.

「Dale、" ******？ " 」

"Ahh. Don't worry about it. [Negative, Problem]... I'm alright"

"All,rai,to?"

"Ahh. That's right"

Sitting down next to him, Latina was eating the fruits bought at the market. Before leaving, Rita came and told him all about providing nourishment and keeping her hydrated, until her mouth was almost sour.

After Dale ate the juicy fruit that he cut up, seeing how sticky Latina's hands have become a thought came to him.

After looking for a little while, he met eyes with Latina who looked up as if she was giving a reason.

"... Latina, she might have had quite a good upbringing..."

The bad kids around here, probably would've wiped their hands on their sleeves ages ago. After watching her yesterday as well, she mainly gives off a [Good mannered] impression.

Of course, the person facing Dale probably has faces where she is nervous too.

She's a smart kid who seems to be able to use something like that.

「 " O' Water、Show Thyself,to this one's command《Manifest :

Water》”」

A small ball of water which was summoned from Dale’s short chant, burst open on top Latina’s hands.

“Something to wipe… Also, I guess we should go buy some of the handkerchiefs that Latina uses…”

Muttering that, Dale who stood up, checking out the market once again, not realising that this repetitive action of shopping, was way beyond what he had first planned.

Just like that, a large amount of luggage was carried back, surprising both Rita and Kenneth, before finally realising that fact.

Author’s note:

As the one writing this it doesn’t really matter what I say but, isn’t Dale-san becoming ‘dere’ a bit too quickly.

Chapter 7
Youth
Getting exhausted over the care-taking of the little girl

Around when Latina finished shopping, she showed quite a tired face.

“Latina, you alright?”

“Alright”

However even if I ask her that, she shakes her head while answering.

Being a kid who can notice the needs of others at such a young age, teaching her this word, may have been a mistake.

Dale let out a single sigh, and after changing the way he was holding his shopping, lifted Latina into his arms.

“Dale. Alright”

「 ” Fatigue、Recover、Impossible、Deny ” 」

Latina continued shaking her head and started hitting his back as he asked requested that of her. The luggage was heavy but even adding on Latina it wasn’t a weight that couldn’t be carried.

As he had thought, by the time Dale reached the [Dancing Ocelot] Latina was sleeping soundly in his arms.

Just like always, Latina’s sleeping sounds always sound so out of tune. Right now she was making a ‘Kupyuu, Kupyuu’ sound.

Lining up the guest seats to use as an instant bed, Latina was right in the middle of her afternoon nap.

Right now there aren't that many guests at the [Dancing Ocelot]. It was too early for those who want to have dinner and it was too late for those looking for work. Figures of travelers and adventurers seeking information can be seen here and there.

Dale began drinking some watered down wine as he looked over Latina's sleeping face.

"Uu-n"

Suddenly a growl was let out.

"What's with that depressing face"

From within the counter, Rita who was acting as a salesperson turned her gaze here like she was surprised.

"Yesterday's request. It's no good you if you don't tell me the results of the request. Because of how things are, there was no way I could bring in a cut of that thing"

"Ah. That thing. The thing that smells. If you brought that thing, I wouldn't let you come in you know"

"If you knew, then tell me about it"

"If I told you, who would take on such a request right?"

Rita replied extremely matter-of-factly.

So, I only understood the conditions for completing the request becoming like that after something like that.

"There's no way other than to take the request giver to the actual place for confirmation. You'll probably be late tomorrow"

The quest giver for this job is the signature alchemist of

Kroix.

Coincidentally he wanted to make his magical beasts into Croneys in advance, it's said that the herbs which only grow in abundance is in this one place.

To provide the proof of completion of driving away the magical beasts, I have to take the alchemist to the spot another day.

A lot of these type of requests, are usually retrieving a part of the monsters — such as ears.

If that『Frog』's stench didn't waft around then that's what Dale would've done.

"But there's no way I can bring along Latina..."

"Isn't it fine to just leave her here?"

Rita said cutting apart Dale's worries in a flash.

"As a replacement babysitter, this month's rent is going to be extra"

"...Is that alright?"

"There's no other way right? Only this time. Next time you have to look for a sitter yourself"

After that, Dale's next topic was to provide detailed instructions to Latina about the matter.

The first sound Latina made after she woke up from her afternoon nap is, "Dale?"

with a voice as if she would cry. This is the benefit of being a

parent.

“I’m here”

Being able to hear his voice, she made a face as if she was obviously relieved.

Placing her down onto a chair, she came next to Dale who had finished writing a document on the counter with a ‘trot trot’.

She grabs Dale’s clothes tightly with her tiny hands, and calms down after looking up at him.

“No good Rita. There’s no way I can leave Latina behind!”

“Don’t say anything stupid. It’s dangerous you know!”

“It’s alright. Even if I desert the client I would come to protect Latina.”

‘This guy might be no good’ was being written on Rita’s face.

“Dale?”

“Latina… Uwah~…, It’s no good after all. Compared the the quest fee, taking Latina might be another choice…tsk”

“You idiot. Soon, the usual jobs would call you out again, and you would need to go far away. And before that, if you don’t have the guts to be in a position to stay at home, there’s no way for you to raise her from the beginning.”

Rita’s argument was fair.

Dale’s job was dangerous, it wasn’t something which he could do together with a young child.

The time which he would be staying at home would no doubt

get longer.

It's a lot better compared to being alone in that forest, and Rita and Kenneth are here too, so no need to worry about meals.

Surely it'll be fine.

But, it being alright or not is another matter.

Making her have lonely thoughts, was something I should have understood though.

"Uu..."

Saying that because he didn't want her to be alone, the option of sending her to an orphanage at this point in time was a no.

This wasn't something he was unable to overcome, just something that came earlier than he thought. He understood that.

"What a cruel trial...tsk"

He muttered without thinking.

'Ah. This guy is no good' was written on Rita's face.

As a result, Latina was recognising sounds obediently.

Dale's words may be crude but, Latina was quietly listening intently with a serious face, tightly squeezing her eyebrows, after making a brave face, "Alright"

She answered with a slight nod.

Innocent. What is this kid, she's so innocent.

"I'm sorry, so sorry, Latina!"

Without thinking Dale gave her a tight hug. Latina made a surprised face.

"Dale? Latina, alright"

Furthermore a kid who would say that, in some ways could be much more mature than Dale.

However not becoming mature so early should also be a good thing.

Dale who was completely in the mood to spoil her, and lead Latina into their room as he lifted her up into his arms.

In the room, the shopping they just bought were piled up. They had carried it in whilst Latina was sleeping.

In front of her he tidied up the things they just bought.

The sounds which came out one by one describing each of the objects were for the sake of teaching her language.

Her underwear and clothes were placed in a large basket, accessories were placed in a much smaller basket. The baskets were placed inside the bed, in the slant of the roof which had become dead space. It was the result of thinking that even someone as small as Latina can reach over with her hands.

There were also a few picture books that were bought. Placing them under the shelf.

Latina was looking intently at Dale tidying up.

She appeared to understand that the things Dale bought were for her.

Just like that Latina sat down on her knees and opened up one of the picture books.

This was a book which was made to teach young children characters.

The content was simple with illustrations next to the name of the object.

Normally considering, to Latina, I thought the content may have been too simple.

But, isn't this book the most appropriate textbook to teach her about characters and language, so I thought.

Dale opens the picture book and slowly reads it out aloud as Latina sat on her knees.

She concentrates on the picture book intently, reluctant to even blink.

As expected, I think this kid possesses a maturity not suited her age.

"Dale,「 **、*****？ 」"

"Hn? Yea. That's right"

Sometimes she would point towards a picture and refer to a problem.

Reading until the end, and looking at Latina, she seemed to be trying to comprehend the meaning of this book.

Opening up to the first page by herself, she looked up at Dale as if urging him.

As he read a word out loud, she would copy after him.

“Dog, Cat, Horse”

“Doge, Kyat, Hursh”

Her lisp was so cute I didn’t bother correcting her.

Before it got completely dark, Latina went into the bath.

Wondering what diseases young children could contract, it’s a difficult problem for new parents but, I judged that being clean would probably be better.

I still wasn’t very secure about taking her to the bathhouse, so for now I decided we would just use the bath at the “Dancing Ocelot”. I was ordered to clean it as compensation.

“No matter how safe it might be, there is absolutely no way I’m going to leave a kid on their own at a bathhouse! Because there’s a lot of accidents where kids drown!”

That’s what Rita said.

But it seemed today as well Latina was quite reluctant to take off her clothes.

It’s only right now that this kid would give Dale an unpleasant face at this time Even though it didn’t seem like she didn’t like to bathe her body, I wonder what she’s so displeased with.

Dale looks at Latina as she scoops up the bubbles with both hands and thought about that.

After finishing dinner, I once again carried Latina who was starting to get drowsy, returned to our room and put her to bed.

Today, taking account of what happened yesterday, I also told her to go to the toilet.

"...Good night, Latina"

He whispered, gently stroking her hair, and then Latina, "Good nite, Dale..."

Half asleep, she repeated his words.

Dale restrained the impulse to suddenly hug her, so to not wake her up.

Author's note:

Dale-san is seriously becoming no good ne... that's how it is so there's no helping it

Chapter 8
Little Girl
First time house-sitting

Morning came but, I didn't think that it would be such a difficult thing.

That's right, Rita watched with surprise from the bottom of her heart as she saw Dale stricken with grief.

"Don't worry, hurry up and go already"

"Latina, I'll try to come back as soon as possible. Be a good girl ok"

said Dale intentionally delaying his departure, as he was hugging Latina who was standing next to Rita sending him off in front of the "Dancing Ocelot".

Sensing the killing intent, like if he was to keep this up any longer Rita would kick him out, he reluctantly let go. He gently rubs her head as he looks at her.

"I'm going now"

Latina tilts her head at Dale's words. There Rita said.

"It's 'Have a safe trip'. Latina"

Hearing her name, Latina looks at Rita.

"Have a safe trip"

Hearing Rita repeat herself, she faces Dale and repeated with difficulty.

"Dale, have a safe chip?"

"Ah. I'm going now"

Seeing Dale grinning, Latina also looked happy.

Mornings at “Dancing Ocelot” was hectic.

Next to the adventurers who stayed the night and were searching for food, was a person who was confirming the request for the flier which was just posted up.

There are usually more people with requests later on in the day but, the requests where they wish it to be completed the same day wasn’t few either. Dealing with that kind of client is also necessary.

Amongst the adventurers who go out to work, there are also those who leave at this time, particularly those people are usually going to buy consumables.

It was so busy that you would even borrow help from a cat.

The bar — speaking of which at this time, especially the dining room, is still going strong — is being handled by Kenneth.

Rita also sometimes comes out to the floor but, mainly she’s chasing up the exact calculations working as a “Akudaru’s Agency”.

The scene of such a busy store, Latina seemed to hold deep interest in it.

“Woah... that’s dangerous you know?”

said Kenneth carrying two plates in both hands, being surprised by the presence of Latina at his feet.

Latina tilted her head with a thud.

Today she was wearing the pink one piece which was just bought yesterday. The hair that Rita arranged was shaking together with the big pink ribbons on both sides of her head. Dale enthusiastically bought a lot of hair accessories so, there were currently enough for a new one every day.

Latina carried Kenneth's cooking, carried empty dishes, and watched on with her eyes on how to handle orders.

Rita was mostly at the counter so, to this girl who didn't understand the language, didn't understand any of the categories.

On the other hand, it was easy to understand what Kenneth was doing.

Up till now, Latina clearly saw that Kenneth was creating food.

It was hectic even now, Latina dished out piles of food to an uncountable amount of people.

Nodding deeply once, Latina disappeared with brisk steps within the shops hustle.

"Hn?"

The moment that Kenneth noticed something unusual was when he looked to the work station, next to the large amounts of mash potato, and the smoked meat which was dished up with the scrambled eggs.

The plates had increased.

In the corner of the washing area, in the place where the

dirty tableware was, the things to wash were increasing.

At first he thought that Rita was bringing them in.

It was during the rush hour of her job but, every now and then she might have some free time.

However Rita, taking the dishes which had just finished cooking out the shop, while interacting with a client, finishing the sales of the general goods, and calculating the bill for the customer who finished their meal.

There's no way she could get out to the floor to do that, there's no way.

"Wait"

A familiar bearded face said one word — leaving behind the cooking under the supervision of an old adventurer who was a regular customer, that fellow opened his mouth blankly.

"What's with that stupid face"

"Back at you. You've hired quite a young little waitress haven't you"

Looking towards the direction that the regular had pointed towards, Kenneth realised.

Latina was carrying the plates.

For such a small girl, even taking just one plate seems to be too heavy for her. She carried one plate with both hands and was walking towards the kitchen diligently.

After a while she would return again, looking around her surroundings restlessly. If she saw an empty plate she would

nod with a ‘un’, and head towards the table with a sense of duty.

To the few customers who were startled by her small figure, she would grin happily, and grab onto the empty plate.

To the Latina who would stumble a little, it seemed like even the customers from other tables would look towards her with suspenseful gazes.

When she safely reached the kitchen, a sigh of relief escaped the bunch of grim-looking men.

“Latina?”

When she was called by Kenneth, Latina stopped moving and looked at him anxiously. “Was I wrong?” was written on her face.

Kenneth thought for a short while.

Latina was looking at the customers carefully and clearing the empty plates.

Without overestimating her own abilities, she does what she can.

Paying attention to the surroundings, avoiding the people around her.

At any rate being able to move without noticing yourself means that she is also able to see how he is moving. This is probably proof that Latina is very attentive to her surroundings.

Kenneth, as if he can easily seize her, places his hand on her

head.

Washiwashiwashi (TL: Sfx: roughing up hair)

“Un. Well, good job”

After the roughing up Latina took hold of Kenneth’s hand, it seemed like she was slightly dizzy.

Even if I leave her be, there’s no harm in it.

That was how Kenneth judged it.

Rather getting some tidying up done, if any at all, was something he had wished for. He said.

I have nothing to do with the customer’s hearts being overworked.

When the morning’s peak had passed, Kenneth took out a container from the fridge that he had prepared the night before.

“Latina”

Calling her, she obediently came to his side, Kenneth let her sit in front of the table inside the kitchen.

The container was turned upside down onto the plate in front of Latina. The insides slipped off like jelly.

Latina’s eyes became like round dots.

Cutting up the remains of the compote, the broth which had hardened into jelly was today’s snack.

He let Latina hold the spoon.

Looking at her as he did the dishes, Latina first poked at the jelly with the spoon, having fun with the bouncing sensation as it shakes.

Nearing noon, the customer flow for “Dancing Ocelot” come to an end.

It was the time where the majority of the customers, adventurers, were out working, the bar too was taking an hour break. During this period of time, only jobs at “Akudaru’s agency” was being accepted.

“Rita, I’m going to go stock up”

“Have a safe trip”

Kenneth called out to Rita from inside the shop, and a more courteous response than usual was received from Rita. And immediately while tilting her head, “Have a safe chip”

From the corner of the counter Latina opened up her picture book, looked up at Kenneth and smiled sweetly.

“… As expected, kids are nice, Rita. How about three?”

“First you start with the first one right?”

Really such an idiot, said Rita who didn’t seem to completely disagree.

After Kenneth returned from stocking up, Latina approached him with brisk steps.

From behind you could see Rita smirking.

“Welkum bak” (TL: Welcome back)

Did Latina say it right? And as if confirming her Rita shook her head

"…"

Kenneth, unlike the usual stock ups, bought back various types of fruit, scattering them about on the workstation.

Now then, what should I make? He folded up his sleeves, and his expression was loosening up pathetically.

You can't talk about other people now (i.e. Dale).

Latina really was a good child.

Lunch time he handed to Latina a small cheese sandwich as well as fruit; her eating manners were good, chewing properly, and then cleaning up after she finished eating.

Apart from those times, she would open up her picture book or, look at whatever Rita and Kenneth were doing.

She would never do anything to get in your way, making sure that she is in a good position.

It was something I had heard from Dale, in the habitats of magic beasts, they seem to survive by finding their own food. It was based on extremely good luck, and much more severe than I had imagined.

However, if Dale hadn't found her, then even he doesn't know how long her luck would continue. Breaking down constantly, it probably wouldn't be long before she ended up in the stomachs of beasts.

It was probably because of that, that her attentiveness to her surroundings are so great.

Looking in front of Kenneth, Latina was starting to nod off to sleep, slowly staggering towards the stairs.

That's definitely dangerous.

Kenneth rearranged a wooden box in one corner of the food storehouse, spreading out a mat on top. Overtaking Latina, he went up into the his bedroom on the second floor and brought down several sheets of cloth.

"Latina"

Calling out, he pat repeatedly on the place he just arranged, and Latina looked back with half open eyes.

Kenneth strained a laugh, lying Latina, who was overcome by sleepiness, down on top of the wooden box.

It seemed like that was about her limit. Latina immediately began to doze off.

Author's note:

To everyone who said that they like this, to those who added the points together. This has become the best form of encouragement.

My impressions received to this point, on the other side is trembling with fear, and becomes the driving force for picking up the pen.

I wish to borrow this space to express my gratitude.

Everyone, as always, thank you very much. I would definitely be happy if you were to keep me company from here on.

Chapter 9
Little Girl
First time house-sitting until “Welcome home”

Latina looked around her surroundings restlessly just as she opened her eyes, “Dale?”

Calling out for the person who had taken her out from that forest.

The person who found her when she was all alone.

The person who gave her a safe residence, and safe food.

The person who made her remember the warmth of a person.

She called out for the person which to her was “the symbol of safety and good”.

“Latina? You woke up…”

Hearing a man’s voice which was different from Dale’s, she started to panic.

As if she had to run away right away, she put strength into her entire body. But then, she noticed the sweet smell gently drifting.

Blinking her eyes repeatedly, Latina remembered where she was.

With the first sound that Latina made after waking from her afternoon nap, being to call out for Dale, that's when Kenneth noticed she was awake.

Looking at Latina as he was mixing a small pot, it was as if she was a small startled animal on alert, questioning her surroundings.

It seems that when Kenneth's voiced reached her, she went on even higher alert.

However, without moving too sudden, she judged the situation later, immediately gathering strength so that she could move at any time.

This kid really does seem quite clever, admired Kenneth. Compared to the large amount of hot-blooded newbie adventurers, she was much more calm.

Being in a position of losing sight on your own situation when you wake up, this childish behaviour is understandable

Kenneth removed the small pot from the fire and faced Latina.

The berry which had fallen apart during cooking was melting nicely, releasing a sweet fragrance into the air.

Just as Kenneth had planned, Latina who noticed the smell started to relax. Getting off the wooden box with a 'hmph', she came next to Kenneth's side noisily.

As for the Latina who was peeking inside the pot which was handed out to her, there didn't seem to be any sign of the small animal whose hair was standing on end just now. Just young girl looking her age.

After drawing her interest, Kenneth, placed on top of a thinly

sliced piece of bread some freshly made jam. He wanted to put plenty on to it but, if he did that a burn would have been inevitable. Almost cooling it right away, making sure that the tasting still had a satisfactory amount left.

Handing it to Latina, she looked at Kenneth with confirmation.

She timidly took a bite of the bread.

Her expressions brightened up, ‘Paaa’.

While she ate like she was in a dream, she stuck her tongue out, licking the jam which had fallen onto her hand, then she looks at Kenneth in surprise. It wasn’t like he was free from blame, and to his laughing figure, Latina also returned a smile.

Latina looked towards the bottle which Kenneth had placed the jam in, as she wasn’t tired of it just yet. To a creator, it was a truly a companion of production.

As the day started to come to a close, the adventurers gradually returned.

It was nearing the time when the “Dancing Ocelot” started to be busy again.

The customers who come to “Ocelot” are not all looking to stay the night. Those who come to drink and eat make up a large amount of the customers.

Apart from adventurers there were also gatekeepers and military police who were coming back from work.

Without being affected, as a shop where you can eat and drink for cheap, it was a shop where a bunch of grim-looking hooligans gather.

When it becomes this time, “Akudaru’s Agency” which is opened during the day actually ends its service.

Rita returns to specialise on the floor, and the couple somehow manage to handle this clatter.

In a seat at the corner of the counter, Latina, who was eating her dinner, was stealing glances at the bustling shop.

A guest who was laughed loudly with ‘Gahaha’, and the gnocchi that was being eaten fell out with a ‘plop’.

Not noticing that, with eyes that became rounded, fixedly observing him.

The first living thing she saw, were with eyes that were like they were staring, thought Kenneth, but he decided not to speak of it.

Just when Latina was starting to get uneasy, the doors of “Ocelot” opened.

“Ara, Dale”

Hearing Rita voice, Latina’s eyes snapped open.

Jumping down from her chair like a rabbit, she quickly ran out to greet him, her steps, ‘to to to’.

“Latina, I’m ba…”

Dale was hugged very tigh~tly by the legs just as he started to talk.

“Latina…”

As expected I made her feel lonely, Dale frowned,

“Welkum bak”

his half-bent posture froze as he was midway through lifting

up Latina who was looking up at him.

Rita and Kenneth were grinning.

Naturally and without restraining his grinning expression, Dale restarted and lifted Latina into his arms.

“I’m back, Latina. You did a great job house-sitting”

Putting a bit more strength into the hug as he was smiling, Latina’s entire face became full of smiles.

The regular customers around were also acquainted with Dale. To his sloppy face, a cold and merciless voice jumped at him.

“What’s that Dale, that’s quite a small girlfriend you have there”

“Shut up”

Dealing with the annoyance, he sat down on a chair whilst hugging Latina.

He asked when Rita brought the food over.

“Latina, what about you?”

“She ate a while ago. She seemed like she was sleepy until just then.”

The subject at hand was on Dale’s knees, with a soft, happy smile. No matter who looks, there was a relieved expression.

“... How was it Latina? Did you behave?”

“She behaved very well. This kid is extremely bright. Even when she was left by herself, she understood exactly what actions she should take and do.”

Rita said as she poured the wine roughly in the goblet in front of Dale.

Dale normally only drinks wine which had been watered down. Rita intentionally, also without asking, decided that in front of him.

It's not like he can't drink it or doesn't like to drink it, it's just that he hates being dead drunk, which is common knowledge in this shop.

In the past too, using that as the reason, a first-time customer looked down on him as a kid, and with one hand he lifted and threw him, this story became a good appetizer in this store.

Latina was rubbing against Dale like a small kitten, entrusting her body to his arms. Up till now this seemed to be the sweetest fawning yet.

(Rather than guilt, I might actually be a bit more happy…)

It was exactly because I made her feel lonely that as a reaction she fawns upon me, it might not be so bad letting her home-sit.

Author's note:

It's a shorter chapter than usual.

Something like matching up around the same amount of content, is pretty hard.

Chapter 10
Youth
Embracing the small girl's aforementioned worries

Latina was more clever than I had imagined.

After one week, Latina could hold ordinary daily conversations, and she became able to break down words without difficulty.

And then at that time a problem suddenly occurred to Dale.

Latina became emotionally attached to Kenneth.

Without even thinking of hiding her grumpiness~ and seemingly pouting face in front of Dale, as if she's a baby chick following after the papa bird, Latina follows after Kenneth, 'tote tote'.

An apron which Dale had no memory of having bought was being worn on top of Latina's one piece, as well as a triangular bandanna are made from the same cloth.

It's the kiddy "helper" look.

Opposite Kenneth who is cleaning up the store, Latina is trying her best reaching out with her hands to wipe down tables.

(It's just like copying the parent. Matching up with Kenneth…)

In the first place, Dale was being cautious towards Kenneth.

(Since the beginning, Latina's stomach had been seized by Kenneth!)

Rather than a problem, it's pure jealousy.

"Cleaning, finish?"

"Yea. That's right"

After checking with Kenneth as he's packing up the cleaning equipment, Latina goes to the kitchen, climbs onto the table and washes the tablecloth. Since she's weak, she couldn't properly rinse out the tablecloth properly and left it there like that.

Close to the washing place she moves, slowly pulling her table.

Doing so she fixes it back to her 'Home position', and sat on the table slightly.

This too, was prepared in the kitchen at some point, tightly grasping her small knife with her tiny hands, she starts to peel the skin off vegetables with difficulty.

If you look at her pace then rather than a 'helper' she's just taking up their time. That's how it is but, Kenneth without acting cruel, came in and sat next to her peeling the skin silently as well.

レ…？

— Despite being taught just a few days ago, even though it's bad, being able to do it by herself shows that she has matured more than enough.

That's Kenneth's story, and while he was anxious, Dale tried his best restraining himself from wanting to attack him by instinct.

"If you're so bothered by it, it's fine if you just don't look"

"But didn't I miss out on Latina's growth?"

This man ends up refreshingly declaring.

As Rita sorts out the books, a lukewarm expression clings to her face.

It seems that after finishing peeling the skins Latina decides to take a rest.

Fetching the picture books she left in the corner of the ingredients storage, she turned up to Dale who was in the store.

She had two picture books.

The first picture book was the one she had been using from the start to learn the language, and the other was quite a lot more difficult in comparison, and was a picture book with a story.

"Dale, book, read"

"Ok"

To Dale, he thought that since it was a book Latina had selected for the purpose of letting him read it out loud, she found it was too hard to read it by herself but, in this short period of time she was able to read alone albeit with a little

stutter.

Usually she would be reading silently but, with Dale here, she seems to have the intention of correcting herself by having him read it aloud to her.

Reading until the very end and receiving Dale's acknowledgement, next Latina opens another picture book and a notebook. In the notebook she was able to diligently write out clumsy characters left behind by childhood.

"This too Rita, you didn't speak of it like this. It seems like she began studying by herself?"

"I mean, when Latina started talking about wanting paper, I thought she wanted to do some doodling but, I would have never thought that she would start practise characters."

"Even at the school held at Asfaru's temple, there's no one there as young as Latina right?"

"Un... but, Latina knew how to hold a pen since the start. She was taught by Kenneth on how to hold a knife but, she was able to use the pen properly without even hearing about it from anybody. I wonder if this kid was a child born in an environment where you can study"

Even now that Latina can hold a conversation, she didn't seem to want to talk about herself much.

What she talked about was only a few things.

Such as that the remains in the forest was indeed her father. After her horn was broken off, she left her hometown together with her father. The place where she was born was a colony just for the demon race — so it seemed.

If so then from this kid's cleverness, it wouldn't be strange if she knew more about various other things.

What's scary is that, this kid probably also understands what 'Breaking off the horn' means. If she talks about her lineage in detail, she might be anxious that she might be expelled like she was in her hometown.

Personally if Latina tells him then he would want to hear about it but, he wouldn't think about forcing it out of her.

Even in the short time that they've spent together, he couldn't imagine this child as an evil existence like a criminal. In that case the 'Crime' is probably something attached and has nothing to do with her personality.

I don't understand if it is a political thing, or a religious thing but, it's definitely unreasonable.

Which is probably why this kid's father left their colony together with her.

"Dale, what's wrong?"

As Dale was thinking that, he looked like he was troubled. At some point Latina was tilting her head and looking up at Dale.

"Hn? It's nothing. Latina you've become better with the language"

Saying that and gently stroking her head, she smiles in delight.

"Able to converse I'm happy. I tried my best."

"I see"

Dale had a gentle expression looking at her smile.

Dale too, since he's been living with Latina, has realised that

he has been able to smile more.

Even when he talked about stupid stories with Rita and Kenneth, until now there hasn't been a time when he was smiling as gentle as this.

It was a change which came from the arrival of Latina.

The interval of time for lunch, afternoon nap, and snacks is like Latina's free time. On the days Dale is not going out for work and such, she spends her day near him.

Sometimes from the store's entrance she glances outside but, so far it seems like she hasn't walked outside by herself recklessly.

It's only strolling around the neighbourhood with Dale or Kenneth, so it probably also means she hasn't recognised the area yet.

However when Kenneth genuinely prepares for the night training, Latina goes to the kitchen and follows Kenneth around.

A repeat of Dale wanting to go check up on Latina but returning sadly without a word as he looked at her extremely serious expression which seemed to say "I'm trying my best" kept happening.

Right now, she was challenging a task which was to mash a large amount of potatoes with a serious expression.

"Calm down a little"

Rita says as she carries a jug of ale.

Basically "Dancing Ocelot" exchanges the exact amount of

money for the item they order. This is done to prevent those who don't pay. However this doesn't apply to regulars, and they can just pay it all at the end.

Everything Dale has accumulated is calculated together with the rent.

From Rita's apron, the reason why sounds of small coins jingling is because she is skillfully handling the orders and payments.

While Rita is in a hurry, her words also contained a hint of anger, due to Dale not answering properly.

From the kitchen, Latina came out holding a tray. Slightly unsteady on her feet because of the weight.

In a moment the store's liveliness calms down.

In this one week Latina's presence was recognised by the regulars.

She's tiny but without even a reason to bully her, she dashes around inside the store. You would notice her even if you didn't want to. And somehow it's quite pleasant. This kid.

She carries the tray carefully, very carefully.

Once she finally arrived to Dale's side, she showed a full-faced smile with a Nipah~

A smile as if her mission was complete.

From the customers he felt like he had heard soundless applause.

"Dale, food, here you go~"

Dale takes the tray, and puts it on the table. Recently Latina's

greatest trial was setting up the table for Dale's dinner.

There's no way she could send it to other customers yet but she wanted to practice so he ended up compromising.

Returning from the kitchen, this time Latina carried in her own share. Due to the amount being quite different, her steps are clearly lighter than before.

Sitting next to Dale, she said in a proud voice in front of her dinner.

"Latina, today, made some too. Dale, try"

"Yup. You did good today as well Latina"

Latina smiling as if telling him what happened, pointing at the mountain of Mashed Potatoes, as well as Dale's praising, was their standard exchange these past few days.

By the way, after the conversation between the two, the next few days you could tell that the sales for the menu that Latina helped out with was raising for some reason.

In his break Kenneth smiles widely at the figure of Latina who is eating happily today as well, while he simultaneously proceeds with the complicated food preparations.

Latina was trying her best everyday.

Someday, she wants to cook for Dale. She put that as her objective. And she knew she had to tackle it seriously.

Kenneth likes people who puts in effort diligently.

She kept doing her best to the point where it was more than enough, and the results are obvious. Even Kenneth says she is

someone who learns quick.

Only Dale doesn't know.

That the reason Latina is able to pass time calmly in this store is only because this store is "The place where I can be at ease because Dale brought me here".

That the reason Latina can be in a state of unconditional lasting peace is because Dale is by her side.

When Dale isn't here Latina, with that small body of hers desperately braces herself with the surroundings, even having times when she would be a threat. Only Dale doesn't see this.

"It's not so bad having a person who you can slightly rely on. Even if it's that guy"

Proclaiming himself as Dale's older brother, the man who understands what being trusted means in his own way, whispered as he was arranging the contents of the pot.

Author's note:

Latina can talk.

So that she can be even cuter than before, it's would be good if I could draw her but.

And, Dale-san... is that fine for you? is what I mutter as I write this right now.

Chapter 11
Young Girl
Encounter with the unknown

Latina was in a pinch.

“What to do…”

Restlessly, she looks at the people coming and going with an anxious face.

Right now where she is, is not where she normally lives in South Kroix. Following Kenneth out to stock up, she came all the way to the East district.

This is the second time Latina has come to the East district.

The first time she came, she didn’t even know the language and even if she worries about her surroundings, there was never a need to since Dale would never leave.

That was good as a result.

This time, she finally took notice of the surroundings.

A row of shops, each of them having their own ingenious ideas to attract the interests of people walking along the road. Kroix with money flow as importance is abundant with goods. It was overflowing with items which up till now Latina has never seen and don’t know how to use.

The South district, is where the atmosphere disagrees with the streets, and snatches away knowledge.

In the first place Latina’s curiosity is strong. And even caution and awareness ended up being surpassed by curiosity, you

could even say it can't be helped.

While she was doing that, by the time she had noticed she had lost sight of Kenneth.

(I promised, to properly, stay with Kenneth… Dale, will he be angry) Thinking like that, she withered away becoming even more depressed.

Looking puzzled Latina brooded over what to do.

But helplessness won, and she didn't know what to do.

If I can't go back, I wonder what I should do.

(What should I do, If we don't, meet again)

I don't like being alone anymore.

Even though there is so many people, I'm tormented by a sense of isolation I can't control.

Bad thoughts, I couldn't stop leaning towards the bad thoughts.

(No… what should I do, if I can't go back… if I can't return…) My thoughts were wrapped around that.

No matter how smart you say she is, Latina is after all still a young child.

Without reason, having her feelings swinging about like that, it's a natural reaction.

But, right now there isn't anyone here to tell her that.

Latina didn't have the judgement that 'If you're lost, you

should wait at that spot' because inside 'That forest', it's not 'Waiting for someone's help' but rather an environment where 'You yourself have to do something somehow'.

Latina walked towards the approximate direction she came from.

Later, even if she had just stayed there for a little longer, a panicked Kenneth would've come back.

"... Where is this?"

Somehow or another Latina who had walked into various streets, and ended up entering an area which she has genuinely never seen before.

She doesn't know but, even inside the East district, in the boundary called the workers street, are homes lined up serving as both housing and work studios. Compared with the main street of East district, it's an area with the prominence similar to low-lying part of the city.

For that reason there are also a lot of complicated alleys, and other people apart from the residents might feel like it's a maze.

And that's how it was for Latina, even if she was to turn around, she already didn't know where she came from to get to here.

"... What to do"

Muttered Latina, puzzled.

“What do you want, you?”

A voice came from behind and she jumped in fright.

Turning her head, there was several young boys loitering around. They were frowning, at the sight of a young girl they don’t know.

“You, whose kid are you, never seen you before”

“……”

The one with the biggest physique amongst the youths said to Latina as he came up to her without hesitation. Not knowing what’s the best thing to say, she stepped back from the boy. He doubted her actions more and more.

“It’s a hair colour I’ve never seen before, you a noble’s kid?”

“That’s wrong, Rudi. If she was a noble’s kid, she’d be wearing a dress”

“True. But, it’s a strange colour. It’s like it’s not gold nor silver”

Next to the big kid called Rudi, a calm-looking young kid with a round face and the young kid with light brown hair behind them both said.

“If this kid was moving in, there’s no way we didn’t hear about it”

“Then you, you’re an outsider!?”

With Rudi’s strong tone of voice, Latina once again jumped in surprise.

(Why, is he angry?)

(Latina is… am I somehow, weird?)

(What should I do… why is he angry, I don't know)

"That's no good Rudi, this kid'll cry"

"I'm the one asking over here so, the one who should shut up is her!"

Even though the round-faced boy tried to stop him, Rudi came closer to Latina violently. Latina, completely panicked, with a pale face wanted to run away and did.

"Why are you running! That's sus yo!"

"Un! <**! ****!>"

However, there was the difference in physique and Latina ended up being caught by Rudi who took a shortcut. The young boys were astonished at the shriek that Latina let out the moment her arms were caught.

"What did she say?"

"It might be a foreign kid…."

The danger from the boys who were grouped in a discussion had already disappeared and only a feeling of confusion was left but, Latina hadn't noticed in her panicked condition. She was struggling desperately as she shouted out.

"<**, **! ****!>"

"What are you doing!!"

Hearing Latina's shrieks, a young girl around the same age as the boys came rushing out from a nearby house. As soon as she saw the ghostly pale Latina she rushed right into the middle of the group of boys.

“To such a small kid, bullying is the worst!”

“Uwa, stop, Kuroe!”

“That’s not it, it’s a misunderstanding”

Apart from the brown haired boy who got away quickly, the other two were sacrificed to a punishment of fists by the young girl named Kuroe.

To Latina who forgot about the panic and staring blankly, the young girl called Kuroe was cool.

As the one who was helped Latina ended up becoming the mediator.

“It hurts? … Are you ok?”

“I’m alright! It’ll be fine if I just spit on it!”

“You would say that Kuroe”

In front of the two boys who Kuroe punched and kicked, Rudi and Marcel – the round-faced boy – squat down Latina who was looking gloomy with a seemingly worried face.

“Latina, we didn’t give you a proper reply so… sorry…”

“Making you scared, it was our bad so….”

After Marcel bitterly laughed, Latina made an even more apologetic face. In front of him, pointing her small palm, tightly straining her expression. Wetting her lips, she spoke graciously.

“<Oh holy light, from thy name grant thy wish, please heal and ease those hurt《Healing Light》>”

From the palm of Latina a gentle light escaped, surprising the

surrounding kids.

Latina also used the same recovery magic on Rudi. Afterwards she frowned and fell down on the ground.

“Are you ok?”

“Ok. Only, a little tired”

Smiling happily Latina answered Kuroe. Taking advantage of that the young boys all unanimously and excitedly surrounded Latina.

“Amazing! A magician!”

“You can use magic even though you’re so small, amazing! Who taught you?”

“I… this is the first time I’ve seen magic!”

Kuroe took a step forward, glaring at them after seeing that their enthusiasm had frightened Latina.

The young men suddenly stop moving and Latina looked out from behind Kuroe.

“Amazing? Latina just, used a simple, healing magic?”

Latina tilts his head and answered.

“Able to use magic, is amazing?”

“Most of the people on the streets can’t use it. Except for the people who work at the temple or the Feudal Lord’s place, or people belonging to big companies. And adventurers I guess”

Even though Anthony – a brown haired young boy – was the one who taught that to her, Latina was nodding like ‘Exactly’.

(Dale is an adventurer. So that’s why he can use magic) And then suddenly she remembered. That she was a lost child.

“Latina, lost sight….. way back, don’t know”

“Where did you come from, Latina?”

“Nearby… ocelot shop….”

Looking at Latina’s dejected face, the kids look at each other.

“Ocelot?”

“There are no shops like that around here, right?”

“Maybe over there? The place with the green flag”

“The adventurer’s shop?”

Latina brightened up at those words.

“Yea. Adventurer, a lot of shops, come”

The kids look exchanged a look with each other.

The Adventurer’s Shop is a dangerous place where outsiders who do dangerous work gather. Their parents forbid them from playing around that area.

But this is helping someone.

It’s definitely not just them wanting to go and see what it’s like.

–After all, kids hold an interest towards things which adults forbid them from doing.

Author notes:

The reason for “Unknown” in the subtitle will be touched upon in the next few stories. Having the unknown is the reason panic exists somehow.

Latina’s area of activity and people relations are slightly

increasing.

Chapter 12
Young Girl
Causing great unrest to the youth

“Latina has become a lost child!?”

At the “Dancing Ocelot” when Dale’s shriek was shouted was some time after Kenneth lost sight of Latina.

Kenneth who noticed Latina searched the surroundings in panic but couldn’t find her. Despite that he still had to deal with the merchant who was going to move the ingredients and such back to the shop after this. There’s also no way he could just keep searching.

Asking the few acquaintances he has in the East District for help, he quickly returned to the “Ocelot”.

He had to do the next best thing, telling her guardian.

“Yeah. I’m really sorry. As I was doing business, I took my eyes off her a little and…”

Kenneth and Dale both, were careless.

Latina is an extremely clever kid.

Finally ‘Something like this should be alright’. Which is something they couldn’t deny had unconsciously crossed their mind.

This kid is reliable so she probably won’t wander around. In any case, it was just an adult’s excuse. In the first place, adults and kids have different viewpoints. The world that they originally view are different. Kids cannot be stopped by the reasoning of adults.

“No, ah. It can’t be helped. It can’t be helped that she’s become lost. AaaAaahhHh… If I knew this would happen it would’ve been better to remember that Search speeellllll, me of the past who said it wasn’t needed, apologize to Latina, sorry, sorry…. no, that’s right, it’s about Latina now… what do, what do? Yes, get, get out a request for the adventurers on the streets to search for Latina…”

“For now, how about go looking for her?”

“That’s it!”

It was savage but, Dale being disturbed to the point of being funny, actually made the surrounding people chill. Dale who was in complete confusion, was told about one of the things he should do, and immediately rushed out of the shop.

“Umm… Rita?”

“In the streets, Latina’s characteristics is seen alongside Dale’s guardianship so, if there was an idiot who wanted to lead her away, they’ll be stopped at the district walls. Even if she’s lost, it’s around the East Districts safe area so…. And if it’s that kid then I feel like she’ll be able to do something somehow but, I suppose…”

After seeing Dale off, if Kenneth could see his wife, she was exceptionally calm. She looks to the regulars inside shop engrossed in chatter.

“Tonight’s alcohol tab is free to those who join the search. There isn’t anything as a reward even if you find her though. Even if you can’t find her, come back before sunset. How about it?”

“Well, it’ll do to kill some time”

“Buying a favour off that guy (Dale) isn’t too bad either”

Hearing Rita’s words, the regulars say while standing up.

Latina is becoming a special existence even to the regular customers.

By the time Latina returned, surrounded by the East District’s kids, there was still some time before sunset.

“Rita!”

Latina slipped past the door smiling and came rushing over to Rita’s side but she suddenly stopped as if realising something.

“Rita, sorry, for disappearing… where’s Kenneth?”

“We were worried. Let me see your face”

Says Rita pointing to the kitchen. To be honest, even Rita was fed up with her husband worrying for Latina to the point where he wasn’t able to concentrate normally on his work.

She quickly headed to the kitchen. Taking a quick look at Latina, the pot Kenneth was holding dropped loudly with a ‘clang’.

“Kenneth, sorry… Latina, disappear, didn’t keep promise”

With her honest apology and her dispirited look, Kenneth couldn’t scold her at all, who understood her own mistakes.

Just patting her head in relief.

“It’s good that you’re safe”

Kenneth carried the dispirited Latina and went back to the shop, where unexpectedly a lot of kids were looking up at him.

“What?”

“It seems that these kids brought Latina all the way here”

Said Rita who had talked to the only girl.

“Well there has to be some thanks for that…”

“Helping a friend is the obvious thing to do!”

The girl raised her voice with dissatisfaction at Kenneth’s murmurs. Latina tilted her small head.

“I see. You’ve become Latina’s friend. It’s already quite late right now… next time, please take your time and come play with Latina”

Rita was grinning, plastering a smile which she normally wouldn’t show off as Kenneth opened the cookie jar made for Latina, skillfully wrapping a share for each person.

Then he bent his knees to hand one to each child,

“Bringing Latina back here, seriously thank you”

properly expressing his thanks. Getting treated so politely from an adult like Rita made the children fidget and couldn’t calm down but, they didn’t seem to be unsatisfied.

When the children were on their way home, Latina sent them off by waving from the shop’s entrance.

As it approached sunset and the regulars returned to the “Ocelot’, Latina apologized to each of them.

“Making you worry, sorry…”

“As long as you’re fine little girly, it’s all good”

“…looking for me, thank you”

Latina once again bowed to the regular who laughed and

waved it off.

When she first came back to the shop, Latina was smiling but now, even from behind, you could see she was feeling depressed.

Repeatedly coming back and fro from the entrance, she was looking down at her feet sadly.

Not just the regulars who knew the circumstances but even the guests who didn't know, at the sight of Latina who was acting different from normal, for some reason silently drank their alcohol one after the other.

That was when Dale came back.

Dripping with sweat, out of breath, he opened the door.

"Rita, after that…"

Wanting to ask if there was any information after that, he noticed the person in question when he looked up.

"Latina!"

Latina's reply to Dale who joyfully called out her name were large drops of tears.

"!?"

As Dale panicked and got on his knees without a sound, Latina's tears crumbled and fell even more.

"La, Latina!?"

"I'm… I'm sorry…hic, sorry… Promise, not keeping it, I'm sorry…. hic"

Raising hiccups, what she said were words of apology.

“Dale, Latina was bad, are you angry?”

“I’m not, I’m not angry ok… Ahhhhhh, I was just so worried!”

While Latina was crying, Dale was shaking his head sideways violently but, Latina further continued with her words. As if he was wrong, she shook her head as well.

“Be angry, it’s ok. Latina was bad so hic… But, Latina, was, was scared, I was scared of what if I couldn’t come back, it was scary”

Tears kept flooding out of her large grey eyes.

For a child this young, looking at herself cry was a first, and murmured with what tiny composure she had left.

“Don’t, leave me alone anymore, Dale…. it’s ok being angry with Latina so, I want to be together with Dale…hic”

After safely returning to the “Dancing Ocelot”, it seems Latina thought about many things in her own way.

Even the recollection of despair and anxiety as a lost child was probably manipulated by that big feeling.

After going through with her belief that she has to apologize, she washed away those feelings of anxiety.

–Which is, what Dale guessed after he calmed down later.

At this moment, in all that confusion, all Dale could do was hold the sobbing Latina tightly.

Right now she's probably crying for the sake of crying.

Latina just occasionally hiccuped without saying a word.

The attack and defense of Latina continuing to cry without end and Dale comforting her without end, welcomed the conclusion of her being tired of crying.

As Latina switched to sleeping, being tired of crying and being carried by Dale, the surrounding guests were watching attentively while giving Dale a shady grin.

In later years it's known as "The Wailing and Panic incident". It was the moment that this shop birthed a new drinking story.

Author note:

Truthfully Dale-san's rampage can't be stopped...

But, writing it is very fun...

Restraint is hard.

Chapter 13
Young Girl
Talking of the past just a little bit

At the words that Latina asked, Dale was shocked like normal.

“Dale, <Friend>, what is it?”

It seems that in the lost child case the other day, Latina became acquaintances with the children of the East District.

This shop in the South District faces the streets and is a shop which has a healthier atmosphere compared to the other adventurer shops but, it isn’t a place for kids to be playing in.

Despite that, recently, I think that I see kids sometimes.

However Dale agreed that their aim was for Latina though.

“It seems like you made some friends, Latina”, was the reply to the aforementioned subject.

“Eh? Um…. Latina didn’t have… friends before?”

“? I don’t really understand <Friend>. Kuroe too, calls Latina, a friend but, I don’t really understand.”

Dale was groaning as Latina was slightly tilting her head.

More than not having any gloomy guilty conscience towards Latina, he couldn’t deduce if she had been persecuted in her village. But, she is a <Single Horn>. To the <Demon Folk>, she might even be an object of extreme disdain.

He has no idea where the landmine might be.

"...Umm... Latina, you, have you never played with any kids around your age?"

"Play together? Like family?"

"No... not family. Didn't you play together with kids from different families?"

Latina once again slightly tilted her head at Dale's words.

"Latina... only had family and adults around"

At her words, he remembers that with the <Demon Folk>'s longevity, they were a race with low birth rates. The amount of children might be pretty low.

"Umm... friends are, people outside of family who you play with and talk with.... and I suppose mostly around your own age"

Realising that my current explanation might end up making myself, Rita and Kenneth <Recognised as friends>, I added another thing.

"While we're on that subject, it's also the people that Latina like"

I'm not quite sure about that bit but, to such a good kid, I want to raise her to think like that. Which is what Dale thinks.

"Does Kuroe, like, Latina?"

"I don't think that you would like to be friends with someone you don't really like"

After considering Dale's words for a little bit, Latina loosened her expression cutely.

"Latina also likes Kuroe. Kuroe, being Latina's friend, I'm happy."

"I see"

Dale patted Latina's head with a happy look, while worrying a little.

Thinking that he should ask about what she just said.

And then said choosing his words.

"...What sort of people, were around you Latina"

"I don't know. What kinds are there?"

Dale realised his mistake.

Fundamentally, Latina doesn't know enough of the <Words used for explanations>.

"Umm... family,... did you have siblings?"

"Siblin?"

"In a family, the children born from the same parents, the older boys and girls are big brothers, and big sisters. The younger boys and girls are little brothers and little sisters. Altogether that's siblings."

"...Latina, big brother and big sister. Little brother, little sister didn't have. No siblings"

After listening to Dale's explanation, Latina replied like that.

"The adults around you, what sort of people were they?"

"I don't know. Latina didn't really, meet with other people, or

talk to them”

Answering like that Latina didn’t seem very happy. This is probably the time to stop.

To her, it’s probably not a very happy memory.

As Dale decided that and was about to cut off the conversation,

“That’s why, right now, being together with Dale lots, Latina is happy.”

The words said by this embarrassed young girl was a critical hit.

She gave a bright smile towards Dale. A smile which wouldn’t lost to the times when she was eating her favourite sweets.

“Latina likes Kuroe but, I like Dale lots and lots more”

“I love you too, Latina! You’re really so cute~!”

Latina seemed extremely happy at what Dale said as he suddenly hugged her.

(If this was a plan to make the topic hazy then this is quite ominous but… If it’s there was a evil person like Latina, then I’ll just have to fall for it!)

Even though he thought of something like that, Dale was still insanely happy.

“Latina’s so cute, I don’t want to go to work”

“Are you talking stupid again?”

Rita made a face like she was tired of reacting to even cutting Dale’s speech short as always with her terribly intense look.

“I dun wannaaaa~!! I can’t come back within the day and I don’t even know how I long I have to stay there! Leaving Latina, tell me what sort of comfort I’ll get facing those damn grandpas in that demon hoard!”

Banging and thudding, it seems that Dale who’s kicking around like a spoiled kick has quite a bit of stress.

“Which is why, going to the capital, you want to let Latina go as well?”

“No way. What would happen if those guys caught Latina… I can only think of bad things”

Returning to normal in an instant, Dale afterwards dropped down exhausted at the counter.

“I get it… it’s work after all, there’s no helping it. If I think of Latina waiting for me, it seems like it’s worth doing more than ever. …Latina too, seems to have made friends so, she can probably be distracted when she’s staying at home… So, I get it.”

I tightly squeeze my fists.

“Even if I get it, I don’t like what I don’t like!”

Ah. As expected, this guy is no good.

Rita just looked at Dale who was decisively declaring that, with eyes like there was nothing she could do.

“If you understand there’s nothing you can do then, go and buy a souvenir that Latina might like at the capital.”

Scales fell from my face at Rita’s words.

“Clothes, there are sizes and she can’t wear it right away so probably not that… Latina likes sweets and a famous shop in the capital or something, how about you look it up?”

“Souvenir… souvenirs huh…”

Given that Dale going to the capital for work was a frequent matter, he had never <bought souvenirs> before. Maybe at most stocking up the items which were hard to obtain in Kroix at Kenneth’s request.

At the mention of the new and popular sweets in the capital, Latina was all smiles. There’s no doubt that she must have properly said her thanks like,“Thank you”. She might have even added, “I love Dale”.

“I, might be able to try my best”

“Ah, -nod-. Yea, alright”

A rather casual response from Rita.

On the morning that Dale goes to the capital for work, Latina came and got out of bed for the sake of sending him off. The morning sun was only peeking out slightly, so it was much earlier than her usual wake up time.

“…Don’t force yourself, did you rest well?”

She shook her head in denial at Dale’s words, Latina started crawling out, squirming from under her blanket.

But she looked quite sleepy. Like it seemed extremely dangerous to go down stairs and such. Dale strained a smile as he carried her into his arms.

Even though not that much time has passed since he has met

her, he felt relieved due to her body having definitely gained weight.

Dozing off as her head sways, Latina who was repeatedly trying to properly wake up, up till now was still half asleep.

“Sorry, Latina. I’ll be away from home for a little while but, can you hold on?”

“Latina... alright. Wait for Dale”

I say as I pet her head, Latina replied with an extremely earnest face.

“I can hold on. Latina, will properly stay in Rita and Kenneth’s place. So, please come back”

“Ah. I’ll come back with souvenirs so... Be careful”

Hugging Latina tightly for the last time, I let her go.

Going out to the shop’s entrance I leave Latina in the care of Kenneth.

“Take care of Latina”

“Ah. Take care of yourself too”

“Latina’s waiting for me, so I have to”

The sight of Dale laughing like that as he answered was something never seen before.

“Then, I’m going now”

“Dale, have a safe trip. Work, take care”

–Ah. I’m gonna try my best.

As she meshed together those last few words, I departed from Kroix.

Authors notes:

The panic that Latina had from Rudi was something due to her own inexperience with children.

Her <Crime> and <Birth> are gradually, becoming clearer as she grows.... or so it should.

Chapter 14
A certain soldier working at the capital Trembling with fear

Author note:

It's become a short story from the view of a third party

He was extremely nervous today at work.

He alighted from the outskirts of the streets of Kroix from the capital of Rabando, Aosbrick together with his partner a small flying dragon yesterday. Flying dragons aren't cut out for flying at night. So it has been decided they pass the night in this place, and the plan is to send people to the capital the next morning, which is now.

"Uwaa~… What should I do, Titi. It's said to be a super difficult person…"

The one complaining to his partner was still young.

He had a unique magic attribute <Centre Attribute>, making use of that ability and employing a flying dragon he was a <Dragon Knight>.

Nonetheless, his partner named Titi was a dragon with the calm personality of the female specimen, not suitable for fighting.

His main duty was the transportation of people and goods.

Kyuu? quietly cried the flying dragon while the young dragon knight continued his monologue to his partner hanging his head down.

"It seems to be the adventurer that the Duke has a contract

with but… it's said that my predecessor, due to making him unhappy was demoted to a remote region… Even though I finally became a high salary earner working in the capital… Uuuu… Will I be alright…"

That adventurer were still young but, he was a famous adventurer who had received numerous achievements. The adventurer had the position as protege of the duke who is the right hand man of the King of Rabando and, offending him will immediately be told to that duke.

His predecessor scorned at the youth of the adventurer, therefore making light of him, incurring anger from the duke, and it is entirely rumoured that he was forced by the duke's commands to be sent to an area of remote territory.

Staying in Kroix especially for him, and dispatching his flying dragon in order to form a warm reception on sight.

It's probably proof that the trust the duke has towards him is just that strong.

"! Titi, he's come…"

My partner responded back with, Kyui.

A black leather trench coat. A magic gauntlet on his left arm. A young man with a long sword hanging from his waist was walking towards this direction out of Kroix.

The still young dragon knight snaps up straight to greet him.

This adventurer, even against his partner Titi, has enough ability to slay it in a single stroke.

Although dragons are not a very warlike species. Despite that the normal strategy is for normal adventurers to form a team to kill them.

"From the order of his highness Duke Eldishtett, I have come to welcome you!"

"Ah. Dale Reki"

The youth responded with a low and quiet voice and looked at the dragon knight and his partner with a calm looking expression. Seeing he is even younger than himself, the dragon knight gulped and swallowed his saliva at the presence that he can never ever reach.

"Over here please"

Guiding him to the saddle attached to Titi's back, firmly fixing onto it the luggage he was holding.

Although the saddle on a flying dragon was much higher than the one's on horses, his posture was not broken and easily climbed onto the saddle. Tightening his belt as if he was used to it, setting up the preparations.

The dragon knight youth too hurriedly went to his own saddles and gripped the reins. These reins were made from a special material allowing for easier delivery of a dragon knight's magic. Using the grip of the reins to tell his intentions to the dragon. On the other hand, the dragon's thoughts are also passed through the reins to the dragon knight. It's the most important equipment to a dragon knight.

"Let's go Titi"

Saying a short sound, transferring the magic power, Titi

opened her wings. ‘Gururuu’, raising her peculiar grumblings, gathering the surrounding wind magic.

Dragons, hold special characteristics of a heavenly race, and the flying dragon which specialised in cladding itself with wind magic to fly, with one flap of those wings, the huge body floated in the air.

The second flap raises them above the skies, with the third, they began the flight towards the imperial capital.

Moving on the road above ground heading to the imperial capital, would probably take a horse around three days.

However, if it’s the speed of a flying dragon then with half a day they’ll reach the imperial capital.

This is the reason those with the aptitude for dragon knights can get high pay for their work.

However, the method for raising flying dragons and the method of maintenance for the reins and the specialised equipment are held with large authority of the country. There doesn’t exist anyone with their own <Flying Dragon Ride>. For the sake of riding flying dragons, there is no other choice other than serving for the country.

(Uuuu…. awkward…)

Kyui? cried Titi. It seems she’s worried for him as he is acting different from normal.

On top of the back of the dragon, it was extremely calm, unlike the surrounding whirlpool of wind magic. Like it was the eye of a typhoon.

The gentle breeze felt comfortable to his sweaty brows.

(Are we just going, to keep flying silently, like this… but, it’s

awkward…)

At the presence of the one on the back, he remembered he was thirsty.

The young dragon knight got down from his saddle and brought out *that* as usual, skillfully using one hand to eat the contents.

Just like that he skillfully handed it behind him, there was no particularly meaningful reason for this.

If he was able to think of a meaningful reason for it, then right now he wasn't using his head.

"If you would like, would you like to have some?"

"…A candy drop?"

I froze just like that at his quiet voice

(It's oveeerrrr!)

To him, his biggest taboo is being looked down on because of his age.

The dragon knight, he, while his smile cramped up — without even realising that he couldn't see the face of the person he was facing — repeated to himself, 'Let's change this situation for the better'.

"Right now, this is the most talked about item in the capital! The flavours change depending on all the colours. And look, up till now there hasn't ever been a candy which is multicoloured and aren't the colours brilliant! It's like a jewel, an item which is popular from the masses to royalty!"

The bottle disappeared from his hand.

As if it seems like he held an interest in it for now, he (the dragon knight) says even more rigorously.

“That bottle too, isn’t it an exquisite work? It seems like females and even kids put small things into the empty bottles! Even for size, there are various sizes from large to small, and it’s very handy even as a small gift”

He was desperate, as if he had become the salesman for the candy shop. If he turned around right now, what would he see.

(Speaking of which, it seems Latina has never eaten candy before. The colours are beautiful and it seems like girls like it. Latina, even when we were buying hair accessories, also seemed to chase the more glittery things with her eyes. Even if she’s small, she’s still a girl, she’ll probably also like it. Ah, and on that note, even Latina’s friend is a girl… I wonder if I also need to give her one. Besides…)

At the very least, during the time traveling to the capital after this, he (Dale) understood that he shouldn’t have a need to brace himself to ask people.

If it was him (Dale) from before then he (dragon knight) would’ve stepped on a landmine but.

Now that was not in the mind of the person concerned. Right now, inside his head, he only has enough space to think about that.

Small Latina, under custody at a place where the person concerned has no idea about, there was no one who knows that

she saved the future of the youth who only had himself.

Author notes:

...Huh? .... How strange.

It's said that Dale-san would think like this from everyone, even though this was supposed to be an episode for describing the place... somehow there's the usual 'huh' feel from it...

Chapter 15
Youth
Visiting the capital

“It’s been a while, Gregor. Won’t you introduce me to your fiancee?”

“Hmph. I get it Dale. Is it alright to kill you?”

That’s how the conversation with a “Friend” he hasn’t seen in a while started at the capital.

Coming all the way from Dale’s normal base Kroix, to the capital Aosbrick, was for the sake of this friend’s father, Duke Eldishtett’s request.

The Duke, as a descendant of the founding king, even within the country of Rabando has a family with a long history. Even now as the prime minister, the trust from the king was strong and his authority was massive.

Nevertheless, Gregor is the youngest of three boys. The second wife, his mother, was a foreigner born in the East Borderlands and his support within the country is weak. The oldest, who was his brother even had a child, and thus the possibility of him being the successor was completely abandoned.

Leaning more towards his mother’s blood, Gregor was a young man with tough features, straight black hair tied behind him, and an appearance like a foreigner. A tall figure about half a head taller than Dale, today his slender body was wearing

quality clothes seeming of a noble.

Polishing his sword techniques in the style of the East Borderlands, even piling up on studies about his own country, Gregor doesn't really adhere to his noble title. In the future, becoming an adventurer is one of the paths he is considering.

Becoming friendly with a mere adventurer like Dale was also because of those circumstances. Another likely reason is also probably because their ages are similar.

The woman Gregor called his『Fiancee』, wasn't one of those formal arrangements but rather his childhood friend, a young lady with whom he shared a mutual love with.

The two had a delicate problem concerning their statuses and it meant that having an official marriage was difficult. Which at the same time was one of the reasons why Gregor couldn't throw away his status as a noble.

"I wanna buy a souvenir and go home but, I need to choose myself something that would make that little girl happy…"

"Did you plan on leaving as soon as you came"

"Truthfully speaking, I wanna go home right now"

"And that little girl? Was she a child born at the place you're renting a room from?"

"Nah. It's my kid"

Dale hadn't noticed when he had grabbed hold of Gregor.

"Geez, she's such a good girl, such a cute, cute, cutiepie. Really. And she's so brave, even taking care of the house right now…. Ahhh…. I wanna go back quickly. What should I do,

missing out on something like her growing up, what kind of torture is that. Un, I'm going back. Going back right now. Oi, Gregor. What's the job this time? It's fine to just go right now, immediately exterminate it for you and leave right?"

"Seriously what happened to you"

Probably, Gregor's reaction is normal.

"You... took in a child of the demon race with one horn?"

Listening to Dale's story inside of Gregor's private room in the Duke's house, Gregor looked astonished after hearing the details of how he took in Latina.

"Ahh. She's super cute"

And Dale was completely infatuated, completely satisfied with narrating how cute Latina is. "Who are you". Is what Gregor probably wanted to say to criticize someone.

"I searched on "Akudarl's Message Board" but, there was no information corresponding to Latina. There's a chance that she's native of a completely locked out Demon race village or, maybe she's an orphan with no relatives and no one looking for her. There's no clues whatsoever so, I can't find out her hometown. ...It's a single horn but the "Sin" of a child like, the person herself probably doesn't even know the reason. I'm of a different species but, there's no possible reason I can ignore her"

What Dale said, even Gregor understood.

What he couldn't understand was Dale's transformation. Just how much has that kid from the Demon race touched his heartstrings.

"While it may true that she's a demon, there's no way that

everyone is dangerous. There shouldn't be a problem even if I live with Latina"

"If there was a problem, wouldn't it be that kid knowing that you've slaughtered her kind before"

To Gregor's quiet voice, Dale was silent for a little while.

"....Depending on the details of the job, even if their the same race as me, I'll kill. It's not just about demons"

"Well, that's true"

Swinging a sword, that is what it means. It's not just magic beasts who are harmful to people. It's not rare for "Human" Countries to be hostile to "Other races" as well.

And the "Demon race" have a deep relationship with the "Demon King"

The seven "Demon King" existences in this world are, represented with their respective number as prefixes. Like "First Demon King" or "Second Demon King".

Their abilities and how they are vary but, even they have a thing they share in common.

"Demon Kings", are endowed with horns. Like the "Demon race".

And each of the Demon Kings are accompanied by "Demons" as followers.

There aren't any "Demons" by birth. "Demons" abide by the "Demon King" and are things which are given power way beyond their original race.

They are not limited to people. Included in some of them are those with beasts shapes and high intelligence called “Phantom Beasts”. However, the ratios are such that the “Demon Race” are the overwhelming majority.

Because of these things, it’s even been questioned that, ‘Aren’t “Demon Kings” the kings of the “Demon Race”.’

“It’s been confirmed to be something that seems to be a follower of the seven demon kings”

“Demons? Just a servant?”

“We aren’t sure yet. That’s probably why you were called”

Gregor says that and looked at Dale.

“It’s also been decided I’m coming with you”

“Are you gonna fine…”

Dale answers mixing in a sigh and gets up.

The time to have an interview with his excellency the duke is almost nearing. It wouldn’t be good to go with the leather coat he always wears. Because of that there was a need to prepare his attire.

This was the reason for him visiting the Duke’s residence before facing him at the office of the royal palace. It wasn’t for the sake of chatting with a friend.

“Anyways in the presence of my father, hold your head up a bit more”

“I got it geez”

Flailing his hands around, Dale headed towards the room allotted to him.

The youth who got off the carriage with the crest of the Eldishtett Duke family was wearing clothes of a black theme.

From the youth who had a presence of wildness which nobles didn't have, you could sense the air of a long time soldier unbefitting of his age.

As the palace guards were guessing who he was, they straightened their backs.

Even the one glance he gave to the soldier who greeted and is guiding him, was one of terribly dead calm.

Stern and cruel, an elite warrior who excelled at both magic and swordsmanship.

These were the rumours about "Him". That impression probably isn't an exaggeration.

Walking next to Dale, Gregor, seeing Dale acting "Normally" seemed relieved, but also like he wasn't. He was embracing a complex mental state.

Right. This is the man normally known as Dale Reki.

To the people he was close to, he shows a charming and calm expression but, on the battlefield he is cruel warrior who would never consider even pardoning hostile enemies.

Although he is still young, in order to devote himself to his work, you could say that he had no choice but to do that.

Fully straightening his back, he walks in the royal palace looking like a warrior.

Because to him, this place was just another battlefield.

Author notes:

To those who thought ‘what’ to Gregor’s name. If you’re here, then thank you very much for reading my other works.

Though, there’s no connection with this current work.

Chapter 16
Young Girl
Enduring the loneliness

A few days after Dale went to the royal capital.

Latina was in a easily noticeable mood, depressed.

Rather than saying she has no energy, looking from behind it seems like she was homesick. As if she was bringing forth “Loneliness” with her entire body.

“Latina… are you alright?”

There’s no way she’s alright. Even if he understands, he has no choice but to ask.

“Latina, alright. …cause, I’m taking care of the house”

Learning next to Kenneth as always, Latina quietly sat as she answered with a voice like it was vanishing.

This kid was always like this.

Even though her expressions and entire body was complaining that it wasn’t like that, her replies were like honour student answers which worries adults.

Kenneth let out a sigh and looks at Latina.

“….Ah. That’s right. “House-sitting”. Dale is going to come back quickly. That’s what he said to Latina after all.”

Latina looks up at Kenneth, tilting her head a little.

Kenneth showed her a smile. If he did a tedious looking face

here as the adult he is, it would only make Latina anxious.

“To the Dale before Latina, this was only a “place” where he left his luggage and used as a base. And now it’s become a “place to come home to”. Him saying “I’m home” to you is proof of that.”

“Dale, always says to Latina, “I’m home” though?”

“Ahh. But, the Dale before you came didn’t. You’re special to that guy”

“Latina, Dale’s special?”

“Ahh. That’s right”

Latina’s expression distorts with a crush. As if she’s holding back from bursting into tears. She tightly grabbed the skirt on her knees.

“Kenneth…”

“Yea?”

“Latina, is it alright, to always be by Dale’s side…”

“….If Latina disappeared then, Dale….will go looking for you half-crazed…”

“Haafu, craze?”

“….It means, to extremely worry, becoming desperate”

After tilting her head at the unknown word, Latina once again looked for words.

“Latina….where I was born, Latina was a bad child so, I was expelled….Even though Latina was the only one expelled, Rag, because he was together with Latina, that’s why he died”

Kenneth continues to work with an indifferent look, he

worked as if he didn't need to catch his breath.

As expected, this kid, understands that she was "banished" from her own hometown.

"Who's <Rag>?"

"Latina's male parent... even though he was sick, he stayed together with Latina.... The only ones, who said that, Latina wasn't a bad girl, was only my family. .... Since Rag died, Latina thought that Latina was a bad girl after all."

After Latina said that, she looked down.

"Dale was the first. Saying that, Latina is a good girl.... even though he is, different to family, he said it to me.... Dale was the first, you know"

And then, she continued with a quiet voice as if telling an important secret.

"Dale, is special to Latina"

"....I see"

I wonder what a powerless adult I was, being only able to reply with that, thinks Kenneth.

Wondering just how much has this kid hid away inside of her tiny body.

"Why haven't you, told that to Dale?"

Asking why when Dale asked her before, she looked like she didn't want to talk about it. Wondering why she chose to tell me, and not Dale.

Towards Dale's questions, Latina,

“If Dale…. knows that Latina is a bad girl then, he’ll hate Latina. …Latina… is scared, of being hated by Dale.”

“I see. Because Dale is important, you can’t tell him”

Latina suddenly nodded at Kenneth’s words.

Dale has already guessed what Latina said just now. Intentionally deciding to bring this small child to his side.

However, this child doesn’t know that.

And she’s afraid of it being known. This child is probably desperate in her own way.

(But, if Dale knew that, Latina told her life story, just like that to me, how would he react….) No doubt it’ll be with an unpleasant look on his face and attitude. How annoying.

“Hey, Latina. Till Dale comes back, want to practise one thing?”

“…practise?”

As is, this young kid, is going to be overwhelmingly depressed until Dale comes back. It’ll probably be better if there’s something to get her into a trance.

And most likely, to Latina, the thing which gives her the most drive, is Dale’s existence.

“Dale will definitely come back with an empty stomach. After all it takes some time to come back from the royal capital to Kroix. Latina, didn’t you said that you wanted to make dinner for Dale. It’s a good opportunity so let’s practise. Dale will be

surprised and happy. If it's said that Latina made it"

"....Can Latina do it?"

"It'll probably be hard to do everything right now. Let's just do what we can. ...How about it? Wanna try?"

Kenneth was relieved as Latina's expression lightened up just a little. As expected, to this kid, Dale's existence is great. In a good meaning or not.

"Latina wants to try. Teach me Kenneth. Please."

And this kid's "Please" is her wanting to do something even while that doting parent isn't here. That's as far as I thought of it.

"A Shepherd's pie. It's discounted so eat it"

"Have you finally started being a hardcore salesman?"

Kenneth stands holding a plate with one hand even though it wasn't asked for, the regular being a bearded adventurer, looked astonished holding his ale with one hand.

"And what is that, looks terribly misshapen. Aren't the insides completely packed?"

"Can't be helped. Cause it's practise."

"Practise?"

Repeating him, he realises that he knows of a person in this shop who would "practise". Actually, there is only one person.

"....The girlie, huh"

"Yup. It's a work of Latina's practise"

"Got it. Give it here"

Repeating such an exchange, came an unprecedented Shepherd's pie boom at the "Dancing Ocelot".

Naturally, the meat sauce inside the Shepherd's pie was something made by Kenneth. What Latina had to make was, the mashed potato which becomes the pie's top, stacking that onto a plate and putting on the cheese. Taking it in and out of the oven was Kenneth but, Latina was also timing the degree it was cooking with a serious look.

In the beginning, the sauce would come out and the potato would be full of holes but, she was able to perceive it expertly after repeating it through the day.

After the first day, even if Kenneth didn't say anything, most of the regulars had become an organisation to help out with Latina's practise.

Best of all, a big reason for restraining it to this menu item, a tiny specialised waiter would come bring it to them.

"Thank you for waiting~"

Latina who had been hanging her head down depressed since Dale told her to house-sit, had immersed herself, her face which was full of vigor wasn't bad either.

On the tray which that small body was carrying over as if it was precious, was a Shepherd's pie which was almost perfect looking.

It's just a little shoddy but as something to sell, there wouldn't be any problems.

"Please be careful, it's hot"

–This little child, might be the most polite server in this shop.

“Please, enjoy~”

Looking at Latina smile as she hugs the empty tray, the regulars were all singing inside, “Such a thing”.

At first it was like, how should the young Latina serve the guests, the men were obviously bewildered — all of them regulars but, even with them as guests, Latina was cutely and cheerfully smiling.

But sometimes they’ll be in a bad mood. The idiots who take a childish attitude towards that small girl — limiting it to just that, their abilities as an adventurer were worse than second-rate but — even if they meet again, Latina would just stare at them as if she was surprised and, leave the scene as if nothing had happened.

Instead, as if observing a strange animal, inquiring about it from afar, it was precious.

“Welcome. Thank you for waiting”

Today too, at the “Dancing Ocelot” Latina’s deluxe shepherd’s pie was in demand.

Author’s note:

Shepherd’s pie is in the story but, it’s a baked dish which is made by putting mashed potato on top of meat sauce (originally lamb).

It’s called a pie but, it’s not made with pie bases and it’s not a dessert.

Given that what Latina can make currently = mashed potato, it was decided to be this menu item.

Chapter 17
Youth
Returning Home

"Finally, I can go home!"

At the residence of Duke Eldishtett, a war cry was raised a certain day after a little over half a month had passed since he had left Kroix.

"I'm leaving, leaving right now! Prepare a flying dragon for me to go home right now! Latina is waiting for me!"

"For the time being, showing up at tonight's banquet is also part of the "job"."

"Noooo~oooo! I w a n n a g o h o m e!!"

".... Is it fine not to go over the present list that the maid has prepared for you? She's gather all that have been a topic of talk recently here. Wasn't it that there was no meaning unless you choose by yourself?"

"Right! I wonder if Latina will be happy"

Towards Dale who easily changes his expression, Gregor didn't even tremble a bit.

He had already got used to it this past half a month.

He gave up.

For the sake of subjugating the households of the "Seven Demon Kings", during the time when he headed towards the

mountainous region on the outskirts of Aosbrick with the select few included with Dale and Gregor, he was like this from start to finish.

Of course, in battle or tense situations, Dale, just like before, revealed his appearance as an elite adventurer. There wasn't any problems either with how he works.

It was just that during this period, with that no good manner, the others were repulsed by him.

It was spastic. It was probably him relieving stress. As a friend, he wants to give him a favourable interpretation like that at least. –is what Gregor who has become "Dale Duty" thinks.

In the subjugation of the "Demon King's" household, even the few elite who went had a single reason. Adventurers form the main body of the subjugation, which is the same as the national army not having to move.

Because if the country's main troops were to be the lead force then, it was the same as declaring war against the "Demon King".

To the other "Country" which had expressed their hostility, the "Demon King" would head to exterminate them with all his strength as well. Given that the "Fellow Demon Kings" are completely separate existences, it wouldn't become a common front but, even in the condition of fighting just one "Demon King", the country would end up having to make a lot of sacrifices.

For the sake of keeping risk as minimal as possible, and dealing with the threat of the "Demon King", an ambush from a small group of unknown origin — basically achieving the effect of an assassination.

Even though Gregor was a person of the Duke's house, he isn't formally enrolled in the military and with the front working as a semi-adventurer, he even has those tasks to deal with.

In the meantime, stopping Dale who wasn't done putting mountains of souvenirs onto the flying dragon, was Gregor's "job" this time.

"Latina~~~!!"

"That's the first thing you say?"

Throwing open the door of "Dancing Ocelot", Dale yelled with a face full of joy. Taking a glance at his actions after half a month, Rita was astonished.

No, it might have become even worse than half a month before.

"Oh what, it's just Rita. Where's Latina?"

"If it's Latina, then she's inside with Kenneth"

When Rita replied as such, he noticed a turbulence on the surface. Suddenly, from inside the person herself showed her face.

Paaaaa~, turning into a brilliant bright smile, coming rushing over.

"Dale! Welcome homee–!"

Bouncing to hug him, Dale caught her in his arms, face full of smiles as well.

Compared to half a month ago, seeing that she's a great deal plumper and having childlike features, Latina was even cuter

than the one in Dale's memories.

"I'm home Latina! You were so brave, house-sitting. Were you lonely, I'm sorry. I was lonely too"

"Latina was lonely. But happy Dale came home safe and sound. Welcome home"

"Ahhh~ …. as expected, Latina is my comfort…."

Being tightly hugged by Dale, towards the cheerfully smiling Latina's words, Dale earnestly mumbled with all of feelings.

(I, did my best)

This is my reward for doing my best.

"So Latina, the souvenirs…"

"Dale, wait a little bit"

Dale, wanting to excitedly announce her souvenirs, having Latina leave him so readily, terrified him.

Looking towards Latina who rushed back to Kenneth's side, tottotto, he followed with his eyes stricken with grief and despair until she vanished. He muttered with unfocused empty eyes.

"Ha….half a month was, too long huh…. fufufu…. if I eliminate all the demons, in this world, quickly, from now on…. I might be able to live with Latina without leaving her…."

"You, are quite tired, ne"

Noticing that he's eccentricities are due to his fatigue, as you would expect, even Rita would show some sympathy.

"….Latina too, tried her absolute best. … Even though we said

that if she was feeling lonely sleeping by herself she could come to our room, she said that “Dale’s room is better”. She said that “I can feel safe with Dale’s scent”

“….Latina, she’s alright? Nothing happened?”

“Well. She seemed lonely. But still, it seems that she mostly recovered having made a goal.”

While he was listening to how Latina was when he wasn’t here and the recent situations in Kroix, Latina came back from the kitchen.

In her hands she was holding a tray firmly, on top was a place of a magnificent Shepherd’s Pie, with piping hot steam raising from the grilled surface, vibrant fruits cut into cubes and a dancing jelly was shaking.

“Dale, Latina made this. I did my best, wanting Dale to eat this”

“La….Latina made this?”

“I did my best”

Receiving the tray with trembling hands from Latina who was smiling proudly, Dale, yelled overwhelmed by emotions.

“This is too precious, I can’t eat it…!”

“No, just eat it”

Even after half a month, Rita’s rebuttals were going strong.

“By the way, Dale. During your absence, a grave reality had come to light”

“Ha?”

In front of Dale who was sitting down next to the cheerfully smiling Latina savouring the pie and dessert that she made with all her might, Kenneth started talking with a grave tone.

“It’s because of the thing I heard from Latina’s friend, Chloe, the other day. “From this spring forward we are going to go to school, are you going Latina?””

“Eh?”

“Chloe and Marcel too. Everyone says they’re going. Because everyone’s the same age”

Latina says as he looks at Dale, thinking about her friends. They were a little older than Latina but, he recognised that they cared for the young Latina.

“Latina is the same age so, are you going? is what I heard”

“…….Ha?’

“No, that’s what it seems like”

Dale sent a gaze to Kenneth asking for an explanation and Kenneth nodded, umu.

“….Latina, next month, that’s the month you were born right?”

“Un”

“Really!? Don’t I have to prepare a present then!”

“….Tell Dale as well, how old you’re turning”

“Hn? Eight”

Why did they ask such a thing? with a nod. Latina tilts her head.

Dale froze for a moment unable to speak.

To that reaction, Kenneth nods, un un.

"....Latina, right now, you're seven?"

"Hn? Yup. Latina seven"

"....so small, Latina...."

"That's true. So small"

"Latina small?"

I thought she was five or six. Which was why Latina was as small as she is.

However now that you mention it, Latina's speech and conduct were proper to an unthinkable extent. Her childish speech is probably only because she has just begun to learn the language, and her grammar as well as vocabulary can't be used as she pleases.

Soon she'll be eight. There's quite a big difference for children of this age in the next one or two years.

The adults acknowledged that their own prerequisites have been wrong.

"....She's a <Demon Race> so, her growth is slower?"

"I thought of that and tried asking the guests but it seems that during childhood <Demon Race> and <Us> have virtually no difference in our growth rates. They say that they stop growing once they mature, and is a race with a long period of adulthood."

"....I wonder if... Latina is smaller"

"She's only smaller"

"Hn?"

Towards the adults who were looking at her earnestly and seem mystified from the bottom of their hearts, Latina once again koten, and tilted her head.

Authors notes:

Thank you for continuing to read as always.

Once again the usual antics of the usual Dale-san.

Chapter 18
Young Girl
A normal day with her friend

Trot trot, you could tell she was happy just from the way she bounces as she walks. Matching her steps, her hair, tied up high at both sides of her head shakes with a big, bright green ribbon.

Her glossy white silver hair, glittering every now and then as it meets the light.

Wearing her recent favourite, a light blue checkered one piece, and of course holding the small, white wisteria basket she likes today.

Finding her playpal in the plaza she brightens up, looking refreshed.

“Chloe!”

Giving a big wave, she started running.

In the South District where Latina lives, there are a lot of places which are unsuitable for children to play in. Because of that the only place where Latina is allowed to walk alone is the main street of the Southern District, as well as the area in front of “Dancing Ocelot”.

In the heart of the streets there is a plaza. Recently, playing together with her friends who live in the East District and those who gather there was one of the things she looked forward to.

It was only until the other day that she was banned from

walking by herself but, according to what Kenneth said knowing her age, it shouldn't exactly be banned and it was decided that she was allowed out as long as she kept several warnings in mind.

A park was being maintained, a little bit separated from the usual markets in the middle of the plaza, and has become a spot of relaxation for the people. There are also a lot of children who Latina didn't know playing there. Getting past those people and returning back to the side of her friends, Latina smiled happily.

"What's up Latina? You seem happy"

"Did something good happen?"

Since Chloe and Marcel asked her, she reports back in a good mood.

"Dale, came back"

"I see"

"That's great. Latina"

Her friends also saw that when Dale was away from home, Latina would look quite disheartened. Seeing that their small friend can finally laugh sincerely, they gave some honest words of blessing.

"Dale, says there's souvenirs for everyone. Let's eat snacks?"

Since Latina was taking out the basket which was stuffed with souvenir candies, Rudi merrily came to have a peek saying he's examining the food. Anthony smiled bitterly.

"Uwah, these candy look expensive! Is it alright to eat it all?"

"You better watch out Latina, cause if it's Rudi then he'll eat it

all”

The friends who Latina played with normally, became centered around these four.

Reigning over this group of four as their top dog and leader, is the lone flower, Chloe.

Latina and Chloe are already friendly to the point they can call each other best friends.

Towards the girl who even had the unshakable throne as the strongest, standing firm even with boys as opponents, Latina respects her greatly.

Chloe too, acknowledges Latina who despite having a small body was a lot smarter than herself.

Each having something the other doesn’t, accepting each other as an equal. It was also for that reason that their friendship had deepened so quickly despite their personalities being completely different.

Latina also quickly got used to the round-faced boy with a quiet personality, Marcel.

Taking care of her gently like a little sister, Marcel was the one Latina liked most after Chloe.

After hearing about slender, brown-haired Anthony, Latina didn’t really understand. If she was asked if she hated him then she would say no. It was that kind of feeling.

According the Chloe he is “shrewd”, and according the adults he is “good at dealing with things”. That’s the kind of kid he is.

And the last one. The boy with the biggest body of the four. About Rudi — he seems to actually be named Rudolph but, all his friends call him by his pet name — Latina didn't like him very much.

In addition to their first meeting not being good but even after that, he would often tease the small Latina, starting to prank her and such. Each time he would receive a heavy handed retaliation from Chloe but, he never looked like he learnt his lesson.

To Latina who up until now didn't really have any experience dealing with children her own age, she didn't really know how to interact with the "childish child" that was Rudi.

Since Latina was following behind the four of them, who the others knew as they were genuinely born in Kroix, she easily entered the circle of friends with the group of kids she just met.

Since coming to Kroix, this was Latina's first experience of 『Playing with friends』.

"What do you want to do today?"

"They said they'll be playing 『Chain tag』 after this"

"With the kids on the other side huh. Latina want to come as well?"

"Un"

Latina was taught Chain tag by the four as well.

The game is a variation of tag, where you hold hands with

the person who tagged you and chase the others together.

It's more fun with more people.

The five, including Latina, went rushing up to the group of children playing in the plaza.

Latina's cutely puffed out her cheeks, pop.

It isn't fair. That's what she emphasizes on the most.

"Latina, feel better please"

"Are the candies good?"

While eating the candies Latina brought, Anthony and Marcel are trying to smooth out the situation. However Latina was popping. Until her cheeks puffed out.

“Why is it that everytime, Rudi only tags Latina?”

“Hn? Cause Latina is small and slow”

Not fazed at all by Latina’s protest, Rudi was enthusiastically eating the brownie he held with both hands.

— They were high class goods from a famous shop ordered by the nobles of the Imperial Capital but, to the kids they could only see it as『Some kind of very delicious candy』.

“There are kids smaller than Latina, mon”

“The small ones are quicker than Latina too”

“Latina isn’t slow, mon”

It isn’t fair.

He had greatly hurt Latina’s pride.

“Rudi, always chases, Latina first. That’s why, mon”

At Latina’s insistence, Anthony smiled bitterly and Chloe frowned.

Marcel shoots back with a casual “True”.

However, the culprit, Rudi was acting as if nothing happened.

“Isn’t it strange that the person in question isn’t aware of it?”

“Cause Rudi is a child”

Chloe and Anthony were secretly exchanging words.

However, the moment she took a bite from the brownie, her expression changes to one that’s smiling, and the entranced

Latina didn't care about it anymore.

— Since the time they had first met, to Chloe's group of four, Latina was "Special".

A young girl with glittering white silver hair, tied up with a beautiful ribbon which looked like the ones they could wear only during festival times.

At first she was all skin and bones but now that she's got some fat, she was extremely charmingly cute. A girl similar to a "Fairytale princess".

Born from a foreign country far away, and though she couldn't speak freely, she could still use magic.

She doesn't have parents but, she's living in a corner of a shop where her foster parent and adventurers gather.

— Every single one of those, was『Extraordinary』to them.

The four of them even know that Latina has a horn.

The small, black horn hidden by the ribbon, was something Latina showed them herself.

Latina had even invited Chloe to touch that section, and she could feel a slight warmth despite it being smooth to the touch.

Since Latina looked sad about one side being broken off to the root, everyone was thinking that it's probably something they『cannot ask about』.

Even Rudi, who seemed like he was indifferent to attentiveness, properly understood something like that.

Children didn't have the delicacies of an adult and readily accepted those facts like, "It's slightly different from us but, those of the『Demon race』are also『People』."

At first they were indeed longing for the『Extraordinary』but, to them right now, the small and kind friend existence they call Latina had become extremely important.

And after understanding that, Latina too thought of them as extremely important existences.

Conclusion-like, Today's Parent

"Hey, Kenneth. Recently Latina has been saying a name, "Marcel" quite often but hey, that's a man's name right?"

"…. (To children of that age, I don't think there's man or woman but….) That's right. It should one of the boys Latina is friends with"

"To my Latina… a strange bug has…"

"It's probably a friend"

"Latina has-! Can you believe that she said she wants to go to that man's house to play! To a man's house!"

"A man's house you say… it's probably a friend's house right…. (Hn? If I recall….)"

"Ugugu….. I still understand if it's that girl Chloe's house but, why that guy's house…"

"…. Well most likely"

"Hn?"

"That kid called Marcel… is the kid from the East District's『Bakery』"

"!!!!"

“…. Isn’t she interested in what a Bakery is like?”

“So it’s food! Is it because of food Latina!?”

Author’s note:

I wonder if you remember? This story has the tag “Romance”.

And then, the useless thing at the end but.

That joke topic can’t exactly be standalone but, if I don’t write it now, I don’t know when to put it in so I added it to the end.

Chapter 19
Youth
Teaching his small daughter

Author's note:

This time it's become like an explanation.

"I see. Latina can use magic"

"Un. But, only one simple healing magic"

At dinner on a certain day, what Dale heard was that regardless of how Latina was only this young, she was able to use magic already.

"Hmmm... I wonder if attack magic is dangerous... but, it's not like there's anything to lose learning it for self-defense...."

What he was thinking about as he moaned, was should he teach her attack magic or not.

(If it's Latina then, she probably wouldn't hurt someone as a prank...) Even taking into account the danger, what helped him reach the conclusion that she should be taught, was her『Single horn』. And besides she's such a lovely girl. At any moment, he can't help but be anxious that she might be targeted by some wicked fellow.

If she has the strength to use it then, teaching her ways to protect herself probably also falls under the duty of the "Parent".

“The healing magic that Latina can use, what attribute is it?”

“Hmm…. It’s the light one”

“The attribute of『Light』huh… then the last thing is, do you know of Opposing Attributes or Equal Attributes?”

“Unn. I don’t know” (TL: btw, Un -> yes. Unn -> no, just sound it out) Even though Latina is shaking her head slightly, Dale was thinking, fumu.

The thing we call magic power is in everything.

However,『Magic』is different, firstly you can only use magic that responds to that『Attribute』. There are seven『Attributes』. Light, Water, Earth, Dark, Fire, Wind, and Center.

Attributes are called『One Type Center』or『Two Type Opposition』, or『Three Types Equal』, and apart from the independent system of the Center Attribute, you are born with either Mutual Exact Opposite Attributes or Three Attributes of High Affinity.

In Dale’s case he has,『Water』,『Earth』,『Dark』, amounting to three Attributes.

“Then, it’s about time to investigate that…”

Even systems which depend on attributes can be influenced greatly.

For example even『Healing Magic』is like that. Only the magic related to the Attributes of『Light』,『Water』, and『Earth』, are able to use the systems of healing.

And even the same『Healing』is different based on their forte,『Water』which has a major effect on status conditions and

external wounds, 『Earth』 which has a slow efficiency but is effective against fatigue and heavy injuries, and 『Light』 which is good for general uses.

"<Oh Water>"

Not even completing the spell, a short initialising phrase.

However responding to that, on top of Dale's palm, pale magic power was flickering.

"Fuaa..."

"Understand? Specifying the 『Attribute』 like just now, and if magic power moves then it means you have that attribute. ..... Since Latina is of the 『Demon Race』, there shouldn't be a problem with the spell language right..."

"Hn? What do you mean?"

Towards Latina who tilted her head in puzzlement, Dale muttered shortly, "Ahh", and continued his explanation.

"The 『Demon Race』 of Latina's is called by other 『Races』, 『Natural Born Magicians』.

The reason for that is because the 『Language』 that the 『Demon Race』 uses normally is the same as the 『Spell Language』 which we spin into 『Spell』 in order to change magic power into magic.

In truth, a large majority of 『People』 don't have the aptitude for that language. They are not even capable to pronouncing the words.

The main premise of 『People who can use magic』, is 『People who can operate the spell language』.... Is it a bit difficult?"

"Hmmm...? Since Latina can speak, I can use magic?"

“Since Latina is of the『Demon Race』”

Taking Latina’s palm, Dale urges her to『Initialise』.

One by one the result of the repetition, he understood that Latina is suited to『Light』and『Dark』.

“If you can even use healing magic then, I think you know but. The spell is『Specifying the attribute』then,『Defining your control』then『Defining the phenomenon to happen』. After that you announce the『Name of the phenomenon』and that’s the process”

“Fuun?”

Koten, Latina tilted her head in confusion.

Judging from that, she can use magic but, she might not have studied to the theory.

Well that can’t be helped either. I’ve never heard of a young girl like this using magic as『Normal』.

Although I don’t know whether or not it’s『Normal』for the Demon Race.

“When Latina was being taught healing magic, how were you taught?”

“I remembered it all. And then, I was taught how to use magic power.”

“…. Rote learning spells huh… say Latina, can you use your healing magic?”

“Un”

At Dale’s words, Latina concentrates with a serious face.

Smoothly speaking the spell like it was a song.

“<Oh Heaven becoming Light, From the Origins of my Name Grant my Wish, Please heal the wounded one《Healing Light》>”

Confirming the overflowing and gentle light, Dale let out a sigh.

“It was a beautiful spell style. Even though there were no support tools, you could still properly control it”

“Really? Latina can do it?”

“Ahh. Latina is awesome”

Dale mutters that and opens that textbook he used to use in the past.

Flipping through the pages, skimming across with his eyes, and found the entry he was looking for.

“Then, then let’s do the theory a little later… Let’s simply try rote learning several composite magics of『Dark』and『Light and Dark』.”

As expected for『Demon Race』, being their original mother tongue, Latina was more well versed in the『Spell Language』.

Even Dale who was supposed to be teaching her, would ask her to find vocabulary he didn’t know every now and then.

“Since spells are a language. Repeatedly expressing the originally lengthy and large vocabulary, it becomes a powerful magic. Although the amount of magic power that uses and the control will become difficult too”

“Really?”

“Ahh. The <《Healing Light》> that Latina used previously too,

was simple…. For example, it'll even activate with <Oh Light, On the commands of thy name, heal wounds《Healing Light》>. If it's just a scratch then that's enough. The magic power consumption would be much less as well"

"If it becomes longer, can it heal, larger wounds?"

"Well because the control becomes more difficult…. I think it might work with support tools"

Magicians make use of items like staffs and rings because they are support tools loaded with techniques to control.

As long as the control is precise, even the consumption of magic power, even the designation of the scope, can achieve the maximum effect under the smallest cost.

A powerful attack magic the likes of which can mow down a large area exists and in theory it's possible there are spells which can burn a large army to the ground in one attack.

However, for that sake adding on the enormous consumption of magic power, it'll also seek the ability to control that. Furthermore, it becomes that a tedious aria is needed. It isn't really suitable for actual combat.

Reciting an entire saga on the battlefield. Speaking of which, no matter how unrealistic it is, it's probably easy to imagine.

Fundamentally Magicians have become the roles of either attacking with a simple form of moves or while being protected in the rear, use appropriate magics there and support the front lines.

“But Dale. Latina has never seen a『magic tool』”

“Because the『Demon Race』is a race of recluses, they rarely socialises with other『Races』. 『We』too, pretty much known nothing concerning the customs of the『Demon Race』”

Dale continued after such an introduction.

“『Magic Tools』have nothing to do with people who can’t use magic and attributes, it’s a tool made so that anyone can handle magic power. And to make『Magic Tools』, is exactly the race specialty of the『Human Race』, the ability to『Enchant』.”

Just like how all of『Demon Race』can handle magic, each『Race』has their own so called『Race Specialty』.

Having wings on their backs『Winged Race』are able to fly, their bodies covered with scales『Fish Race』are able to breathe in the water, these are『Race Specialties』as well.

The『Human Race』not having any major trait in their physical bodies themselves, this race’s abilities were used to make tools.

“Because it’s the special product of the『Human Race』, so it doesn’t exist in non-social places. Well, that’s how it is”

“Even though it’s so convenient. I wonder why the『Demon Race』doesn’t become friendly with other people”

“….True. I wonder why”

Knowing one of the reasons Dale held his tongue.

Those reclusive races have a certain tendency.

— He would regret this decision in the future.

Author's note:

It was the necessary time for Latina to learn magic but.... there's still a lot of explanations huh...

It's hard to do it just right....

In a『Sword and Magic Fantasy World』, in order for magic to not become overpowered, I've established rules ahead of time. Well, that's how it is.

For me, even not using magic, a vanguard who only uses sword techniques is something I like too.

Chapter 20
Young Girl
A Certain Summer Day

Latina's birthday was during the sixth month.

There are seven pillars of god which govern this world, and in this world where a large majority of laws are represented in sevens, even years are split into seven associated cycles. In other words one year, which is until the seasons rotates back, is split into seven times two, fourteen periods which makes one month.
(TL?:すなわち季節が巡り戻るまでの一年を、七の倍の数、十四で割った期間が一ヶ月なのだ。)

A single day too is split into fourteen intersections, and these are an imitations of the god's names being called, Hour of Maru or Hour of Segi *etc.*

『Surface』 is the called the same as noon time, and 『Under』 is called the same as the night time.

Dawn is called 『Surface Hour of Maru』, Sunset 『Under Hour of Maru』, Twilight 『Surface Hour of Segi』, and Before Sunrise seems to be 『Under Hour of Segi』.

(TL: So basically describing time and stuffs. One year has 7 months, One month has 14 days. One day has fourteen hours, each represented by the seven gods twice, sort of like am and pm, in case you were confused(i mean i was))

Latina's birthday celebrations was entrusted to Chloe's house.

Her house was a tailor and although their shop cannot

maintain their subcontract work, their skill is certified. So they placed an order at their shop her family ran on the main street.

This is because Latina was interested in the clothes making process.

It seemed like she asked Chloe to see how her own clothes were made and frequently went to watch.

In the process, Latina picked up the basics of how to hold a needle.

Dale was disheartened that Latina had troubled Chloe's family to such an extent, and gave his greetings holding a gift in one hand slightly flustered.

But Chloe's mother laughed and said,

"When my child is together with Latina-chan then, she'll try her best to show off her good side. Even though her head isn't bad, she's fickle and won't study properly. I should be the one thanking you."

A light pink one piece that goes well with Latina, decorated with flower embroideries here and there.

When she had finished making such a bright and sunny dress, Kroix was welcoming the summer.

"<Oh Black Darkness, Grant Thy Wish by the Origin of Thy Name, Steal away the heat, Lower the Temperatures《Temperature Reduction》>"

Making a small noise, paki paki, the bowl in front of Latina

froze. After making sure of it, she started mixing the contents with the spatula in her hands.

Since the so called act of making ice is a compound magic of『Dark and Water』, Latina who doesn't have the water attribute couldn't make it but, the act of lowering the temperature to let it freeze is just the『Dark』attribute which she could do.

In her own easy to do way, she was introducing magic into her life so that she can fix and at least command the language that Dale had simplified and taught her.

Once Summer came, the thing that Latina liked to make the most was variations of ice.

Things like Sherbet or Ice cream, she was using various ingredients to make something new every day. Of course, the recipe was taught by Kenneth.

When it comes to him making himself, he uses a magic tool, and it's a process which requires some time but, if it's Latina then it can be done in an instant with magic.

It can be said that magicians are suited for cooking.

Although normal『Magicians』, won't take on requests like those.

Repeating the process of mixing and freezing countless times, when she finished the soft and fluffy sherbet that she was aiming for, Latina cheerfully took it into the store.

"Rita, thank you for working. Take a break ok"

"Thank you, Latina"

In her usual spot at the counter handling documents and fights, Rita was exhausted by the heat. The wind doesn't always blow in even when the windows and doors are left open.

Furthermore the type of customers, were a bunch of men which made it twice as hot just looking at them. Even Rita who had been in this business for a long time says it's a tough time.

Eating the icy dessert of Latina quality, Rita looked as if she was genuinely happy.

"Ahh…. delicious. Even when I ask Kenneth, he'll only make it once in awhile. Thank you, Latina. It's really good."

"You're welcome"

Taking a bite from her own, Latina also smiled at that.

"But you know. The one Kenneth makes taste better. I wonder why"

"Because Kenneth can't lose to Latina yet, right"

Muu. At Latina's unwilling looking expression, Rita answers as she laughs.

"Kenneth is also trying his best you know?"

"Hnn?"

Latina seemed curious towards Rita's words but until Latina had come to this shop, the types of desserts Kenneth could make was pretty much non-existent.

Nowadays, his repertoire is so large it's seems like he can even open up a small dessert shop, and his wife Rita knows that he has been diligently developing new recipes, working hard for Latina's sake.

"What did you eat, back in Latina's hometown?"

"Hnn? Things like <***> or, <******>"

"….Umm…. how did they taste?"

"Um, well… there wasn't much taste. Since it was just that, I was surprised at Kenneth's meals. There's a lot, and it's heaps

good”

Not noticing that Rita had become speechless, Latina smiled happily.

“That’s why you know, Latina. Latina wants to be able to make yummy meals. Yummy meals is definitely happiness”

“Wearing a black longcoat in this season, every year I’ll think ‘seriously am I an idiot?’ ”

“That, try saying that in front of that heavy soldier with the full plate armour”

Coming back early to the『Dancing Ocelot』, Kenneth let out an astonished voice as he ordinarily poured a glass of cold water to the completely exhausted Dale.

Dale’s coat is filled with magic power, and in addition to being lighted to normal armours, it surpassed them in defense. Wearing it together with the tunic which was knitted with a material that can’t be cut by blades, it was an excellent armour, enough to protect his body.

However, even then, it’s hot in the summertime. Hot things are hot.

“Dale, welcome back. Eat it, it’s cold”

“Yea. I’m back Latina. Thanks”

Effortlessly retracting his pouting expression just now, Dale looks on with a smile. Latina placed the ice onto the tray.

“….Recently, Latina, you’ve been making this a lot but, you’re not tired from over using your magic are you?”

Dale asks as he takes the bowl and Latina nods deeply.

“It’s alright. After doing it a few times, working only on the

uncertain parts, I understood how to do it”

“...Is that so”

Kenneth was suspicious at him, who was looking at Latina different to normal, a serious look was on his face.

“Dale, what’s wrong?”

“No... I was just wondering about the『Demon Race』, if they are all so excellent with their magic power control.... It’s as if Latina is already a master in scope specification.”

“...Is it something that amazing?”

“The kid hasn’t even studied theory you know? After she had practised it, with what she comprehended, she’s optimising it’s magic power and strength and squeezing out the effective range of the magic to its limits ...It’s true that the of the『things she can do』, the ‘things’ were taught by me but, there’s no way I taught her how to use it”

As Kenneth stared fixedly at Latina, she returned the look slightly confused with her large eyes.

“The spell formation as well, isn’t the simple formation I taught her but a cross made by adapting the healing magic spell formation she had originally known and a delicate technique. Originally, the control load should be bigger though”

“Since Dale taught me, Latina learnt it? Before it was like ‘Paaa~’ and lots of magic power comes out. Now, it’s like ‘Here’ and the magic power used will be just that much. It’s easier now”

“....See, see”

“True. She might have what it take to be a genius. In the first place, Latina could learn anything quickly anyway”

“Is that so?”

At Dale's reaction, Kenneth made a face like 'What now'.

"Cooking and cleaning, and now recently, sewing as well. After just being taught once, Latina's understanding is extremely quick. Rather, the environment where a kid like this who can digest anything couldn't do anything up until now is the strange thing"

"Eh?"

"I mean isn't that right? Someone like Latina who can learn at this pace, why is it that until now, she has no traces of having learnt magic or household chores? Since it's this kid where, 『It's not strange if she can do it even if she wasn't taught』.

No matter how different their race is, there probably wouldn't be such a large difference in this"

"Well I guess..."

"Wha~at?"

Koten. Towards Latina who was tilting her head as always, the adults were piling on their assumptions.

"Well, it's about whether you were in an environment where you weren't taught anything, or whether you didn't do anything and were in a good environment..."

"Hn? About Latina?"

"Yea. ....In the place where Latina was born, were you not taught anything like this?"

"Hnn.... Well Latina. Hadn't decided. Back then"

Latina came back at them with a slightly vague answer, and this time it was the adults who were tilting their heads.

"What have you 『not decided』?"

“Latina doesn’t really know either. But you see… Unn. Latina doesn’t know anything.”

She presses both hands against her mouth and shook her head.

It seemed like she was about to say something but, since she ended up withholding her tongue, Kenneth and Dale met eyes, both knowing that Latina probably won’t say anymore than this.

This little kid, despite looking like this, she’s quite stubborn.

Author’s note:

Summer ends just like that, despite the fact that I’ve not having eaten any snow cones/shaved ice (TL: or whatever you people call it).

Chapter 21
Young Girl
That『Incident』

Why did he go to see how things were going? If he was asked, Kenneth would probably be troubled to answer.

The Latina he had met just now had a terribly bad complexion so he was worried, is also a big reason.

Which is why it seems, he was able to notice the tiny, strange sound which would've ended up escaping his ears normally. And then, worried about that, he went to see how things are going.

That was『better』.

–『Best』would've been to notice the symptoms, and being able to stop it before it happened…. However.

The streets of Kroix was welcoming Autumn.

Latina, together with her friends has started to commute to the school which has been established in the shrine of『Yellow God (Asfaru)』located in the heart of the district.

『Asfaru』is the god governing over studies. In a fairly big district like Kroix, there are shrines everywhere, to the children who haven't started working yet, it is burdened with the duty of minimum education.

In Kroix's case, the two years after the autumn of the year you become eight are assigned to that.

The literacy rate within the country of Rabando is not bad if you restrict it to those who live in districts.

Not just to merchants, the『Information』in the streets can be represented by writing. It's a necessary ability for both adventurers and labourers.

"Latina, you don't seem very lively?"

"Uun. I'm alright. I'm lively"

While preparing to go to school, Dale looks doubtful at Latina's condition which looked slightly depressed.

But Latina patches her expression up immediately, and made a smile.

At first when she started to commute to school, she seemed really happy everyday.

As if the act of『Learning new things』itself is fun, she would even report it to Dale looking like she would bounce.

That had changed, these few days.

Hugging Latina tightly, she made a strange face.

"Lately…. has there been any changes or anything at school?"

Tremble, went Latina's body as it jumps slightly.

She answers with a low voice, looking down.

"….A new female teacher, came"

"Does it have something to do with her?"

“Uun(No). Everyone, just says that the previous teacher, teaches better but, that’s all”

Dale knit his eyebrows together at Latina’s appearance which didn’t look like『That’s all』at all. But, getting the pretty stubborn Latina to confess is not an easy thing.

“Latina, being worried, isn’t a bad thing ok? I really treat you as someone special so…. please rely on me?”

“Dale… it’s alright. Latina, just thinks the teacher is a little…. *scary*, that’s all….”

–At this time, I should’ve paid more attention. Dale thinks.

Living at『Dancing Ocelot』, Latina was not even hesitant or timid, even being in contact with the rowdy『Adventurers』she wouldn’t stop smiling. I should’ve thought about the meaning of『Scared』–

A few more days pass, Latina was looking more and more depressed.

It seems that the time she spends with friends is fun. She even says she made a new friend. Everyday, she was reporting like that.

But, only about the topic of her『Teacher』would Latina not touch on.

Maybe she herself is thinking of it poorly and running away.

Thinking like that, the adults were on point.

(TL: そんな風に大人たちが思っていた矢先の事だった。)

With a completely pale face, Latina came back.

She looked terrible.

So much so that Kenneth who normally goes and gets her, was speechless.

So much so that you could say, she might end up collapsing. Her complexion was bad, her clothes and hair a mess, one side of her ribbon was coming apart.

However above even that, what stabbed at Kenneth's chest was, her expression.

Like she was at a loss.

Like she had ended up losing everything important to her.

At Latina's expression of『Despair』.

–Since Kenneth had first met Latina, this kid was smiling.

In that forest, she was a young girl living by herself despite losing her blood relative that she ought to have relied on.

Like things that even adults cannot tolerate, like things that a young girl shouldn't have to shoulder, carrying painful, sad and bitter thoughts, and yet Latina was smiling.

That Latina, is bringing out the『Soft Side』inside her heart to the surface. — What I immediately thought of, was something like that.

"Latina....? What happened?"

At Kenneth's voice, Latina shakes heavily with a start, and crunched up her face as if bursting into tears. However "....Nothing, special"

Latina squeezes out an answer like that, turning her back around and went up the stairs.

–At that time, if it wasn't Kenneth but Dale who went to greet her, maybe it would've been different.

If only Dale was not away.

It wasn't too long after that, that Kenneth heard a sound from above, that could only be described as a『strange sound』.

A muffled sound that he has no recall every hearing.

He had a feeling that the air trembled severely.

It was just, just a ominous sound.

Reflexively, Kenneth rushed up the stairs.

Going pass the second floor, up into the attic.

There, Latina had collapsed.

It was gloomy in here, with light only coming in through the window.

What she had done, he understood instantly.

Taking a step towards her, Kenneth notices that Latina's head was inside a pool of blood. Her white silver hair had been, stained with fresh blood.

"Latina-!"

In addition to being his former job, Kenneth who had gotten familiar with the sight of blood and wounds, nevertheless was shaking because, the one here was『Only Latina』.

This is the result of what『Latina herself』did.

Kenneth with a nearby clean cloth — fetched from Dale's room — while pushing against her『Wound's opening』, takes her into his arms, and rushed down the stairs.

The cloth stains with red before his eyes.

At least pressing against it, didn't stop the bleeding.

Give healing magic to as soon as possible — otherwise, there'll be no way other than to singe the『Wound Opening』.

Latina, by herself, broke off, her remaining『Horn』.

As a symbol of the『Demon Race』, in that section were nerves and blood vessels passing through.

Compared to the impression that it was just like it looks, a hard hollow bone, it was actually a sensitive organ.

To injure it, is no different from plucking off your limbs whatsoever, getting assaulted by pain and bleeding.

Exhausted, the unconscious Latina didn't move.

Kenneth rushed inside『Dancing Ocelot』whilst carrying Latina.

Looking at Kenneth's ghastly appearance, Rita who was in the store as well the regulars who were in the middle of chatting were startled.

"What's wrong Kenne..."

"IS ANYONE IN HERE ABLE TO USE HEALING MAGIC!?"

The meaning behind Kenneth's words, and the Latina in Kenneth's arms who was stained with the colour of blood. Who knows which was the one they noticed first.

"LATINA!?"

"Is the girly hurt?"

Rita screamed. So much so it was unlike her, losing the blood in her face.

Kicking away a chair, thud, a regular stood up and pushed himself out from his company. An aging man rushed over to Kenneth's side, facing his palm towards Latina's head.

"With my magic, I can't do a lot"

"I don't mind. Please just stop the blood"

Exercising the healing magic, the force of the blood that had not stopped weakens.

Kenneth looked towards Rita during that time.

"Just in case, I'll take her to the medical centre at the『Blue God(Niirii)』's Shrine. Once Dale comes back, tell him that. The shop's closed today"

"U-understood. .....Kenneth, what happened to Latina?"

"I don't know the details either. Anyway, currently medical

treatment is the priority. I'm going"

Fixing how he carries Latina, Kenneth started to run with all his strength towards the direction of『Niirii』's Shrine.

–Something we found out later.

Latina, says that she has the ability to vaguely sense『Things that would harm her』.

It's the reason that the very young Latina was able to survive alone inside『That Forest』.

–Within the many plants and animals who contain poison, she was able to only recognise the things that were『Alright even if she ate them』.

–Before the beasts that would harm her came, she was able to hide herself.

–When she had met Dale, she could feel that he wouldn't harm her.

Everything that happened, happened because of that subconscious ability.

–Latina can『Instinctively』see through her own『Enemies』.

Her『Instinct』, *this time* too had been working correctly.

Author's note:

Writing it, it's a troublesome episode...

Chapter 22
Youth
Monster < Parent and Change
(First Half)

Author's note:

Monster's are also parents who flee barefoot.

Dispatch. (TL: don't ask me~)

Without his normal leather coat, nor the shirt he normally wears, the one wearing the superior black clothes because once again, to him they were this『Battle Uniform』.

Without his normal leather coat, nor the shirt he normally wears, because to him in addition to being superior black clothes, that was his『Battle Uniform』.

The『Saint Seal』going down from his neck too, was not a getup he normally has.

If they even slightly knew that,『That』with it's considerably elaborate structure was made with materials, strictly determined, depending on his status at the shrine then, they'll probably realise that he held a considerable position at the『Shrine』.

Even the elderly female priest who has entrusted with the Shrine of『Yellow God (Asfaru)』in this District of Kroix knows of him.

An adventurer who holds deep ties with the current prime minister, his excellency the duke.

However, 『Shrines』 were detached from the country's authority, becoming an independent organisation that has a recognised privilege to be outside the country's laws.

Although they are within the country of Rabando, they have no reason to receive the orders of the royal family or duke house.

At least on the front.

Dale knows this as well.

Which is why today he is not being 『The adventurer supported by the Duke's house』 but was visiting 『Asfaru』's Shrine as 『A high ranked Priest』.

The 『Divine Protection』Dale has — the power to give God's miracles to frail 『People』– was not a property of 『Asfaru』 but, even if it was a property of the other gods, people who hold 『God's Divine Protection』 cannot not be treated badly by any Shrine.

The gods are all equal, as they are existences in line with each other.

Furthermore Dale's 『Divine Protection』 is quite a high ranking one. There is no 『Priest』 who doesn't understand that. Excluding those with extremely low ranks, hired for the sake of doing chores and odd jobs, everyone in the 『Shrine』 has a 『Divine Protection』.

Originally, the goal of the organisation called 『Shrine』 was to shelter in the people who hold the unique power called 『Divine Protection』, and was established as a place in order to protect them. 『Priests』 are an occupation which only allowed

for people with『Divine Protection』to do.

"Why, I've come to this place. There's no need to tell you again, don't you agree. I think I have the right to ask about the circumstances"

"Err…. yes. That is true"

Even she, the one responsible had the information come to her.

The fact that the young girl of the『Demon Race』, who had come under the guardianship of the youth in front of her, is commuting to the school established by the Shrine since this autumn.

And even, to that girl,

the foolish thing this Shrine's『Priest(Teacher)』did to her.

"For me, no matter how much you flaunt your principles, I have no plans to deny it. People of the belief that『Human Master Race』is not rare either. ….But, I think that in contrast to the views of the people who live in this district『Kroix』, that's quite a narrow-minded view."

"….It is as you say"

"This district has been built upon by trading with travellers, so no matter what occupation they have, they have a deep relationship with other races. It's impossible that the people serving the『God of Learning』don't know about such an obvious thing, don't you agree."

The man named Dale, is extremely terrifying when his

emotions appear calm. Even she, whose meeting him for the first time can feel an irritable sweat transpiring down her back.

The auras from slaughtering enormous monsters and magic beasts, no matter how high a rank the priest is, isn't something they would experience so often.

"I hear you told the *children* your opinion of mocking and abusing the『Demon Race』. Is that the recent opinion of『Asfaru』?"

"…. *She* was born in the neighbouring land, in the demon race's living area…. her relatives parted because of a quarrel with『them』. Because of that…."

"Because of that, you're saying that it doesn't matter even if you verbally abuse a girl who has done nothing wrong calling her『monster』, is that『Asfaru』's opinion? That's a new interpretation."

"No, absolutely not…"

She searches for words to say as she wipes away the sweat on her forehead.

With the words just now, it showed that the youth before her eyes already knows the whole story of『What had happened』.

In reality Dale had only investigated the basics about what had happened to Latina.

Hearing the story from Latina's friends as well the proof from Rita, her『Main job』 and the『Towns Rumours』 through Chloe's mum. He had reached a confirmation after comparing both parties.

It seemed that the female priest who took the job to teach Latina and the other kids, was transferred here from a bordering district of the neighbouring country quite recently.

That kids were calling her, 『 the Person who's always cold』. The person herself might not have intended for that but, children are sensitive to a face like that, and don't decorate their words.

It seems that in the beginning Latina was taking some distance from that female priest. Latina had gotten emotionally attached to the priest who was working as a teacher until then, and Latina had never had such an attitude from anyone before.

Her friends too, seemed to be cautious.

–And then that day.

That woman noticed Latina's 『Horn』.

"『Demon Race』....."

Muttering quietly, and she grabbed hold of Latina's hair. After her beautiful horn which had been covered by the ribbon was exposed, she spat out hatefully.

"Why, in the district of 『people』, is an annoying *thing* like you in it!"

"-! *Thing*...."

"It's impossible for those *sub-species* other than 『Humans』, to be 『people』 don't you agree!"

Firing out her words as if they were indeed correct.

Then she released even more poisonous words at the

dumbfounded and speechless Latina.

“It’s impossible for a strange-looking『Monster』, who can continue living with the same appearance for over a hundred years, to be a *person* don’t you agree”

With a face as if she came to believe that not one thing of what she said was wrong, she loudly told the children who were bewildered by the situation.

Latina, having her hair grasped, couldn’t even move, and was pushed out to the front as if flaunting her spoils.

“Sub-species other than the『Human Race』are not『People』. Like this, holding a strange-looking proof(TL: horn), even if that’s how their life ought to be, they are monsters different from『People』. Don’t be deceived everyone!”

–The『Human Race』, regarding population is a race which accounts for an overwhelming majority, at times they don’t have any less『Ignorant』people than『Ignorant races』.

It is especially sad that I can’t even say for certain that the『Human Master Race』way of thinking, that only『Humans』can be called『People』and that other races are called『Sub-species』, is the minority.

Which is why in that sort of sense, you could say that she only expressed her own principles.

However, in『Kroix (This Town)』, that is heresy.

Without even noticing the disgust across the children's faces, she shouted again.

"Especially the『Demon Race』, they are wicked, foul beings connected with the『Demon King』! You can never let your guard down. Her hiding her origins like this, and mixing into the streets of『People』is the best proof of that!"

"Kyaah!"

Getting her hair pulled even stronger, Latina screamed with a completely pale face, and that was the signal.

Chloe threw with all her strength, the『Slate』on top of the desk.

It didn't hit her but, it struck the wall, making a loud sound as it crumbled.

"What are you doing! That's dangerous!"

Taking notice of Chloe's actions, she loosened her hand. Latina dropped to the floor.

Anthony and Marcel start to move, in order to go help Latina.

In that instant, Rudy kicked the desk.

A large desk which seats three people, with a lone child's strength, would at most shake a little but, it was enough to get that woman's attention.

"Stop! What exactly are you doing!"

At that shouting figure, the children in the classroom were not just disgusted but were even, scared.

The appearance of *that woman* shrieking, raising her eyes and,

the appearance of the sweet girl, everyone's close friend, crouching as if she wanted to cry.

To the children, there was no need to compare who was the『Monster』.

The instant Rudy tried to kick the table again, Chloe matches his timing and kicks it from the other end.

This time for sure, the desk makes a loud sound, falling to the floor.

"STOP IT! STOP IT!"

Because the two had gotten the hang of it once, at the next fallen desk, she shrieks even louder. Several children cried. Those voices only irritated her more as she shouts out again.

"STOP!! STOP!! STOP!!"

At violent sounds and the unusual situation, what the other priests who had rushed in saw was, a disastrous classroom as if a storm had passed through, and the scared, sobbing children.

In addition, in the center was『Their co-worker』shouting with a furious expression, and the figure of a child glaring at that『co-worker』, protecting a ghastly looking young girl, from her.

"Teacha...."

While the priests came out to take the『Woman who should've been their teacher』away, Latina called out to the priest who had been in charge of these children's education until quite recently, with a terrible complexion.

"Is something different? Latina... Are『Demons』different

from everyone?”

“……Latina-san. Things like different….”

“What is ‘life is different’? What is, ‘living hundred years’? ….Is it different from everyone?”

At her painful voice, that person frowns, and looked sad but, he decided not to lie.

Bending his knees, he meets eyes with the small Latina.

“….. The biggest difference between『Humans』and『Demons』, isn’t their appearance.『Demons』have the longest lifespan amongst the『Races』. More than two times『Humans』, a race that can live through many months and years.”

Latina’s grey pupils enlarged.

No doubt Latina was a clever girl, being able to understand the meaning of those words.

Without concealing the shock she received, Latina was on her way home. The voices of her worried friends couldn’t even reach her.

And then, with her own magic, she personally broke off her『Horn』.

Author’s note:

Since it ended up being longer than I had thought, I split it into halves.

I didn’t plan to split it at first, I’ll upload the next part in the afternoon. (TL: not me~ :v)

The『Slate』in the text, is a notebook that every students uses, similar to a small blackboard. (TL: Fuck, she's 8 for fuck sakes)

Chapter 23
Youth
Monster < Parent and Change
(Second Half)

Pale, Latina laid on the bed, her complexion fading.

She tried to regain consciousness but, somewhere in her hollow, lifeless eyes, they slowly move towards a person's presence.

At the sight of him out of breath, coming running, her grey eyes flickers.

"....Dale....."

And what she called out with a hoarse voice, was his name.

『Indigo God(Niirii)』's Shrine governs 『Life and Death』. Because of that, it became an organisation researching medical technology, pathology, and pharmaceuticals and such. Again, using the results of that research, by establishing a medical centre, even the townspeople are returning.

Latina was carried into the medical center because of Kenneth. It was also lucky that there was nothing wrong with her body. He was told that the initial treatment, as well as finding her early was good.

If it wasn't for that then even for the 『Demon Race』 who are said to be tough, with so much bleeding coming out from such a small body, there's no way she would be alright.

"Latina.... why did you... such a thing...."

As he mutters with a trembling voice, Dale slides his hand across Latina's cheek, and she scrunched up her face.

“Uu….. Uah….. Aa….”

Letting out an unrecognisable voice, her tears fell like a flood.

“Latina…. does it hurt?”

There was no need to answer with an anxious voice.

She put all her strength into gripping Dale’s hand tightly, sobbing.

Shaking her head as if she was refusing.

“I don’t want it….. I don’t want it…..”

What he heard in between her cries, was that kind of wail.

“Latina?”

“I don’t want it, a『Demon』’s symbol, something like that…. Latina, 『Horns』 and such, it’s better if i didn’t have them!”

At this time, Dale was perplexed at Latina’s words as he had still not found out what had happened to her.

However, at Latina’s unusual appearance, he warns his inner heart that he must not carelessly scold her.

“Latina…. Latina. What’s wrong? What happened?”

“I don’t want it…. why, is it? Why is Latina a『Demon』? Even though Latina can’t live at the『Demon』’s *place*…. even though the『Demons』 didn’t want Latina…. even though the ones who cared about Latina, who said Latina could stay was『Humans (Everyone)』….”

(TL: Side note, just in case people don’t know, sometimes Japanese words have a different meaning/saying to their original in which the author writes a new version on top of the

word which I will represent in italic brackets)

It was a first, Latina looking this confused.

The things she tended to hide in front of Dale, her true feelings and complaints, Latina's sorrowful screams resound within the hospital room.

"Why, is only Latina's *time*, different?

Even after everyone's dead, only Latina…. being left by myself, I don't want tooo….."

At those words, Dale guessed that Latina found out about something.

He had a hunch that she found out about the『The length of time determined at birth』, the so called difference of life span between『Demons』and『Humans』.

"I don't want tooo…. nooo…. Latina, why, why….? It would've been better if I wasn't a『Demon』

…….

Not being able to be with everybody, I don't want thaaat…..

Even though I don't want to be alone anymore…. Only Latina, gets left behind, even though I don't want that anymore ……

Even though I want to be with Dale, my friends, always…..

During the time everyone's not here, I'll be alone, I don't want that anymoooree…."

— The thing that had hurt Latina, made her despair, was not

『evil intention』which had been directed towards her.

It was the『truth』— The unchangeable『truth』of the『Difference between races』.

Dale, had not informed to Latina this『truth』before.

— Amongst the『People Races』, the common features that of the『Races』that tend to be『Unsociable』is their『Longevity』. Yes.

(TL:『人族』の中で『閉鎖的』な傾向のある『種族』の共通点は、『長寿種』であること)

By having the length of time of life to be different, it means there's a large difference in their values and this births a gap.

『A Human's 10 Years』and『A Demon's 10 Years』, have different worth as well as time experienced.

In addition to the absolute value of the things they originally have being different, it's also difficult to compromise.

"Latina... I'm sorry....."

Not even Dale could decide if he should apologize but, those were the words which immediately rushed out from his mouth.

Holding the sobbing Latina into his arms, he hugs her tightly.

Latina's soft hair gathers at her cheek, he brushed gently at her『Wound Opening』, which still had small traces of blood, with his fingertip.

"You were in pain, I'm so sorry, Latina...."

He awkwardly, but gently, caresses her back.

So that he could even slightly comfort the pain of the young girl, who was crying with all her strength, as if even breathing was tough.

— And then, after that, Dale found out what had happened to Latina.

Because he postponed it himself, she was thrust with the『Truth』, the difference between races, with the『Worst possible timing』.

What she had hurt herself with, was the attack magic that he had taught her. — Latina, concentrates at only one point with her uniquely excellent control skill, and with the might of her attack magic which could only be considered as showing off, splendidly broke off her『Horn』.

–That truth.

–Which is why, *this* is half, an outburst of anger.

Because even Dale『Himself』was embracing the irritation and revolt.

As he thinks that, he shifted his attention to the aging female priest who was wiping away her sweat in front of him.

He made a『Smile』which even he knew was cold-hearted.

“I hear from the rumours that, even in『The district you were in before』, a similar『Incident』had happened.”Aura(Haki) The priest’s complexion got increasingly worse.

It was information that the people of this district(Kroix)

shouldn’t know. It’s understandable.

However, it was information that『The expert』Rita, had came up with in her investigations for Latina’s sake.

Who had turned into their enemy. It’ll be troubling if he doesn’t engrave it to his heart a bit more. (TL: もう少し、肝に命じて貰わねば困る)

“Was the incident brought up with an『Fairy Race(Elf)』or something? If I recall, the exchange between『Elves』in *that district* is deep, the main industry of that district should’ve been the sightseeing business with the『Elf’s』『Songs』as their landmark? I hear that it became a mess such that the『Elves』boycotted their public performances.”

Which is why in panic, she was changed assignments to the far away district of Kroix.

Because she couldn’t stay in that district.

And then due to the unexpected personnel change, even the『Shrine of Asfaru』in the district of Kroix fell into chaos.

That was also the reason Latina and the other’s teacher in charge changed.

In order to appease the uproar in『that district』, a high ranking priest of Kroix was sent over there as a substitute. In order to fill in that hole, the priest who was in charge of Latina and the others, took over that responsibility.

Even the people of the Shrine, never would’ve thought that immediately following that big mess, after she transferred, something similar would happen.

However, the person herself completely believes that『her own principles aren’t wrong』. Not even reflecting on her

actions. The reason why is because『The ones who are wrong, are the people around her who are censoring her』.

"I request the『Right』to exercise my Divine Protection"

"That is...."

His request was an『Authority』recognised by a high rank priest. Any god's priest is able to carry it out with any god's priest.

(TL:　彼の要求は、高位神官に認められた『権限』だった。どの神の神官が、どの神の神官相手に行うことも、可能とされている。) It's the biggest reason that he'll come in carrying something like a『Holy Seal』in his hand today.

She gulps at the words Dale solemnly told her.

"It's not that I don't understand the feeling of wanting to protect your『members of the same organisation』, you know. But still, if you continue to protect the coworker who had made such a big mess of things then, I think you have that much resolve right"

Dale warns her along with a sharp glance and, continued once again.

"If you do not accept then, I'll go until making a request through『Red God(Afumaru)』's Shrine. Once it comes to that, I think that you guys who had tolerated this whilst knowing the whole sequence of truths, will have your responsibilities questioned though"

『Afumaru』is, the god of war, as well as the god who governs over conciliation and judgement.

That Shrine, is above every land's law and authority, an organisation to bring down『Judgement』.

Over there they bring down the『Appropriate Judgement』mercilessly.

To those who are self-conscious of their own faults, it has the same meaning as a death sentence.

–If you don't want a large amount of people to be punished through collective responsibility then, obediently fire the idiot, let her take responsibility for it– If what Dale did was to be expressed a few words then, it would be that.

–At that time, Dale said, holding the sobbing Latina closely.

"….But you know, Latina. Even if we were the same,『Humans』. I would still, definitely, die before Latina.

….. I'm older than you and, I'm working a『Job』where it wouldn't be strange when I die."

At the words she never asked for, Latina struggled violently.

In order to refute his words, in order to not want to acknowledge them, she shakes her head furiously, crying loudly similar to shrieking.

Dale held Latina tightly in his arms, who was shouting『No』with her entire body.

So that she doesn't run away, he grabs hold of her arm.

"But you know, Latina. Listen to me. …..Me, meeting you, I think that I was really happy. I think that I was really happy during the limited amount of time that I had spent with you."

While not losing to her shouting, he tells her his thoughts, saying everything he had to say.

Since he met her, he had welcomed a big transformation in his own life.

He is thankful from the bottom of his heart. The one who gave him this kind, dear time, is without a doubt, because of the small child within her arms.

“I was happy to have met Latina. That, I’ll never regret that. …… Which is why, Latina, please don’t say something like『it would’ve been better if you didn’t meet』me…..”

A tear-stained Latina looks up at Dale. Trying to tell him something with a soundless voice. While hiccuping, she shakes her head looking different from before.

“….Tha…..That’s wrong….. La-Latina…..”

Coughing over and over again, she spoke while gasping for breath.

“Meeting, Dale…. I was happy….. Really, really….”

“Thank you. Latina. ….If you cry like this because of how hard『separation』would be then, don’t you agree that means that *we,* are important existences to you? I am happy too, I think”

“……Un. Dale is, Latina’s *special, nano*…..That’s how it is…..”

After I landed a kiss on Latina’s crying face, she made a surprised face.

Her surprised face is much better than her crying face.

Dale grinned to her, as if he was a child who succeeded in his prank, properly meeting eyes with Latina.

“I was happy meeting with Latina. ….Even when I die someday, I think I can definitely say that. ….Which is why, until『that time』, let’s stay together?”

“Un. ….Latina, was happy, meeting Dale…..”

“I really like you”

“Latina too, about Dale, likes you the most….”

She felt extraordinary relief as just a faint grin floated upon her face.

If it’s for the sake of this child’s smile then, he can try harder, more so than he is now.

As he holds that thought within his chest.

Author’s note:

It’s because Dale-san is holding a cheatish『Divine Protection』.

For now, there are a variety of people aren’t there. In this world.

Chapter 24
Young Girl
That『Incident』's aftermath

Slap.

A light sound resounded.

The person who was hit, Latina stared blankly in wonder but, Chloe who had hit her had tears forming.

–A few days after that『Incident』.

She was able to be discharged from the medical center immediately but, by the side of Latina who was taking care recuperating, Chloe came to visit.

And then, when Chloe heard the news about what Latina did — breaking off her own『Horn』, shedding lots of blood — that if she had been unlucky she might have lost her life,『That』was what Chloe did.

While she sobs, tears falling, Chloe had hit Latina once more.

The boys were holding back Chloe, but considering they weren't putting any strength into it, it had the same meaning; Latina was so surprised she couldn't say a thing.

Until now, Chloe had protected Latina from violence, therefore she had never been violent with her.

"Stupidhead! Latina you stupidhead! What have you done!"

And then, the one who was violent, Chloe was making a heart-breaking face the entire time.

“Even though it was a pretty horn! No matter if you had that or not, Latina is Latina! Besides….”

Thus, it was the first time Latina saw Chloe’s crying figure.

Seeing her『best friend』’s bitter face, who was stronger and braver than the boys, even Latina wanted to cry.

“Latina…. doing something…. that might kill you, you big stupidhead!”

At the sight of her best friend *(Chloe)* finally raising her voice, bursting into tears, Latina finally understood.

That her own fears, dread, helplessness, those feelings, she ended up making her important friends taste it.

“I’m sorry…. sorry…. Chloe….”

Her voice clogging up midway, Latina once again, large tears fell.

After the two hugged, raised their voices and was only crying loudly.

–Below the stairs, Dale heard the crying sounds of the two young girls, turned his heel and went down the stairs just like that.

Thinking that Latina, having such『close friends』was a really good thing.

Right now Latina's『number one』is him but, if he doesn't try hard then even protecting that position will be difficult, it seems.

He had heard that at the school, *(Chloe)*she had taken the initiative to protect latina. Completely thinking of her as a『handsome』young girl.

After this, in front of her two important existences, her『Guardian』, and『Best Friend』, Latina who had exhausted out all her feelings, made a refreshing expression as if an evil spirit had been eradicated.

The『Truth』is not something that can be overturned. That fact is something she, as clever as she is, completely understands. However the result was her waving about her『feelings』from thinking that she『didn't want to accept it』.

Even so, Latina was able to learn from this.

Because she personally experienced existences who accept all of her feelings of wishing, her feelings of『not wanting to accept it』.

"Latina is... so happy"

Muttering a few words, Latina let down her hair.

She was without her ribbon but, there was no longer a『Horn』on that head.

If you look really closely, you'll be able to check the horn stump hidden in the hair but, it is already difficult to distinguish her as a『Demon』with a glance.

"When *Rag* died, Latina had thought that Latina would die too. Dale finding me, saying that it's alright to come with him, I was super happy, Rita and Kenneth were kind, meeting Chloe

and the others, everyday was really fun…. Latina started to forget it”

Posun, Latina who was being held within Dale’s chest, did not have the feelings of agitation like the other day.

Really such a clever girl.

Having her hair brushed by Dale, she quietly made a happy expression.

“Death, and *separation*, *Rag* always taught me ‘what death is’. …..Because Latina thought that ‘it’s good to always staying like this’, Latina was scared of *separation*”

“Anyone would be scared. Even me, when I heard that Latina got really hurt, I thought my heart would stop”

“Chloe too you know, cried. …..Which is why, Latina thought that Latina is blessed. Chloe too you know, thinks that she doesn’t want to *separate* with Latina, it made Latina super happy”

After Latina says that, she gave a mature smile, unbefitting of her age.

Her immaturity stands out but still, she turns her beautiful face, full of happiness and gratitude towards Dale.

“Latina was happy being able to come to Kroix. Happy to have met everyone. ….Latina, being able to be happy right now, all of it, is because Dale found Latina. Thank you, Dale.”

“Being told such a thing by Latina, I, thought I would cry.”

Gulping down a rarely undiluted wine as he says, Dale’s

words seemed to be boasting halfway through.

Kenneth places down the plate of side dish with a thud as he shows a shocked face but, after Latina got hurt, until he saw her safe and calm figure, Kenneth too, was showing a look of extreme chaos.

Well, this time, even that Rita, was not able to concentrate on her work, and was making mistakes she normally wouldn't. She couldn't say this and that about Kenneth.

Because in this『Dancing Ocelot』, Latina is already『An important existence who belongs here』.

"Since today is Latina's getting well party~ I will treat everyone to a round~!"

After Dale shouts that in the store, booing came back at him all at once.

"So damn stingy!"

"In times like this, it's where you pay the whole tab, don't you agree?"

"Shut up! If you guys say that then you'll drink until I'm bankrupt right!!"

Dale shouts out indomitably at the booing, and the shop gets swallowed into a whirlpool of laughter.

"No doub' bout it!"

"Rita, give a round of the best alcohol in this shop to everyone!"

"There's some set aside?"

smiles Rita brilliantly.

"Why are you trying to bring out the alcohol you normally

don’t sell?”

“Isn’t it obvious that since it’s expensive, even if we take it out normally it won’t sell”

“Since it’s such an occasion, let’s pour it in our biggest mugs”

“Kenneth!? This kinda alcohol, normally, you don’t take it out in mugs right!?”

“What are you saying. If the owner says we do then it means we do.”

“That’s right”

“This… couple!”

At them arguing back and forth, loud laughter shouted out more and more.

In this kind of merrymaking, troubadours who are normally strictly banned in this shop start to sing. Naturally, there was nothing to earn nor donations but, instead a singing contest started out of nowhere.

The sign of merriness, further calls forth merriness; If it had to be said, compared with normal, the quiet『Dancing Ocelot』was wrapped in an unprecedented liveliness.

“What’s wrong? It’s seems busy”

At the noise, Latina who should have been sleeping in the room, came down as she rubs her eyes.

At Latina’s call, the grim fellows broke out all at once, and as one would expect, made her jump.

However, to those outlaws turned drunkards, they had no room for consideration like that.

“The main actress arrives~!”

At the same time as that shout, she was carried into the center of the shop.

“What? What?”

There was no one answering Latina, looking around restlessly. Her eyes darting around in surprise at the simultaneous applause.

Even Rita who is normally on the side of stopping such things, is carrying a large amount of alcohol mugs with a smile. Although Latina was surprised at Dale and Kenneth also smiling, she was obedient as is.

A cheerful melody was being played.

At the sight of the surrounding people, everyone, smiling, Latina also made a delightful expression.

In the center of the store which was temporarily changed into a stage, she leaves her body to the music as invited.

And then, a new fact came to realisation on this day.

Latina, who was skillfully good at everything but, she had no sense of music and sense of rhythm.

Afterword

Finally finished….

A painful story was difficult to deliver. It ended up longer than I had thought too.

Speaking of which, since I, believe in stories with happy ends and salvation, please continue with me as that area is safe.

Always continuing to read, really, thank you very much.

CHIROLU

(TL: Huh… so we still don’t know what happened with the shrine peeps :v)